SRI SATGURU RAM SINGH
THE EPOCH REVERSER

ਜੁਗ ਪਲਟਾਊ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ

ਨਿਧਾਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਆਲਿਮ

Translated By

Prof. (Dr.) Kuldip Singh
Ph.D.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Dr. Kuldip Singh, Professor & Head, Department of History and Chair Professor 'Baba Satguru Ram Singh Chair' is performing his services at Central University of Punjab, Bathinda. Prof. Kuldip Singh is a well-known name in the academic circles associated with the history of modern Punjab. He has been awarded Ph.D. degree by Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, for writing a thesis 'Namdhari Movement-contiuity and Change'. He also obtained M.Phil. Degree on the topic of Namdhari Guru Ram Singh and his Movement, form the History department of Guru Namak Dev University. He also pursued master degrees in the subjects of History, Punjabi, English and Sociology from Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar and Punjabi University, Patiala. Before his appointment in Central University of Punjab, Bathinda, Prof. Kuldip Singh worked at Sri Guru Angad Dev College, Khadoor Sahib (District Tarn Taran) on the post of Associate professor and Principal for a long time. He has been honoured by different national and international Namdhari world Sikh institutions of America and Canada. Some of his notable publications on this subject are: Understanding of Namdhari Movement, Namdhari Guru Ram Singh and his movement, Namdhari Samparadaye Udbhav AurVikas.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

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Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

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Prof. (Dr.) Kuldip Singh
Ph.D.

Baba Satguru Ram Singh Chair
Central University of Punjab
Bathinda

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Jug Paltaoo Satguru (Punjabi - 1947)
by : Nidhan Singh Alim

Sri Satguru Ram Singh: The Epoch Reverser

Translated by

Prof. (Dr.) Kuldip Singh M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D.
Chairperson, Baba Satguru Ram Singh Chair,
Professor & Head Deptt. of History
Central University of Punjab, Bathinda (India)
E-mail: profkuldip@gmail.com, M. 94632-55697

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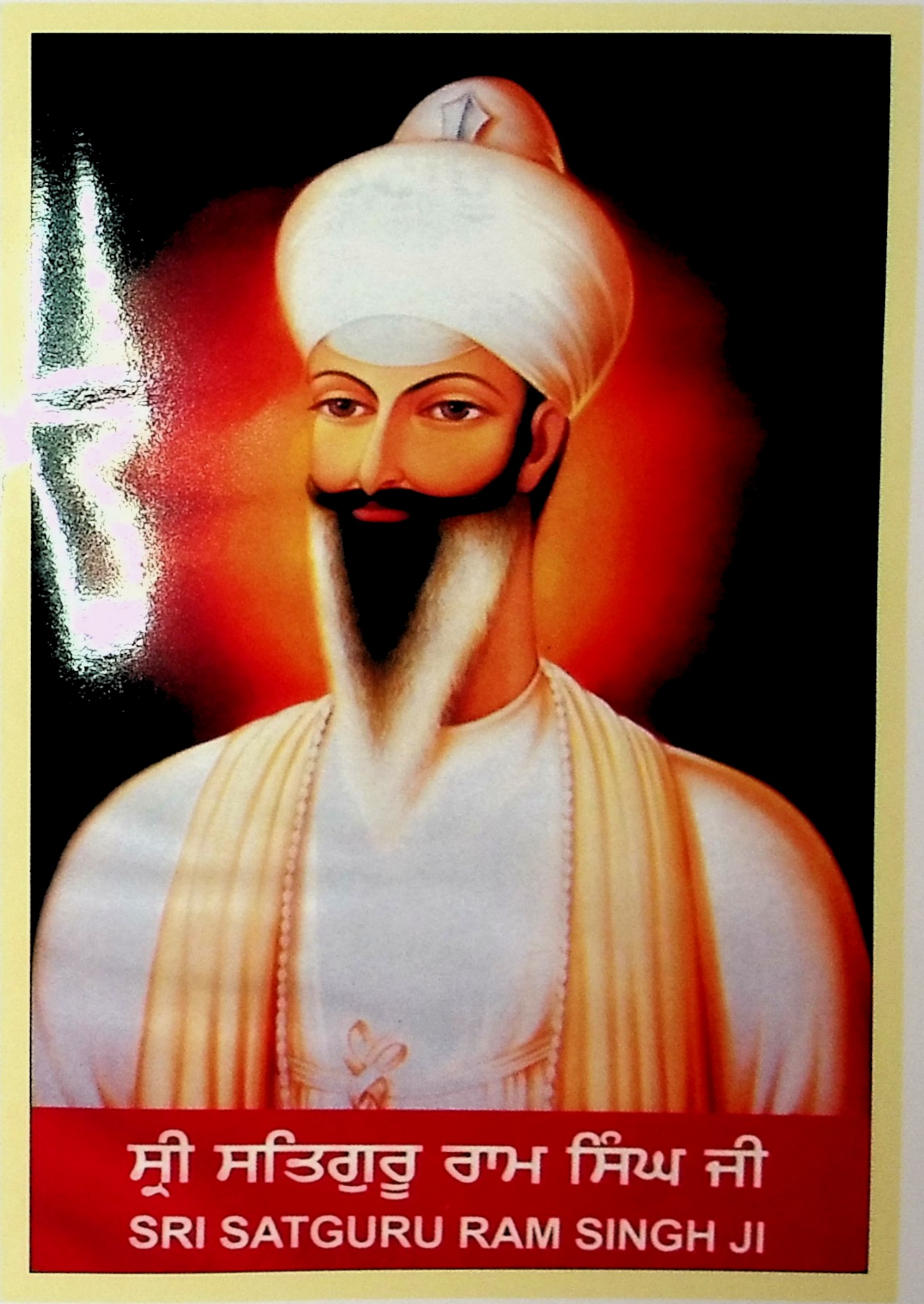

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Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

DEDICATED TO.....

The patriots, devotees, *Gursikhs* and saints
who are fond of reading the historical feats
of those great personages who not only lost
their lives but entire families and
the ones whose eyes are eager to have glimpses
of the revolutionary *Satguru* i.e. "The True Master"

—*"Aalim"*

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CONTENTS

–	Foreword	9
–	Introduction	13
–	A Word from the Translator	19
1.	Flash Back	21
2.	Life in Brief	37
3.	The Formation of Sant Khalsa	40
4.	Ardh-Kumbhi Fair in Haridwar (1918 Bikrami-1861 AD)	45
5.	Deepawali(Illuminnation) of 1919 Bikrami (1862 AD)	47
6.	The Impact of Propagation up to 1863 AD	49
7.	Kooka Movement in the Eyes of Government	52
8.	Khote Fair and Anand Karaj Tradition Introduced	55
9.	Bans on Kuka Deewans (Meetings)	58
10.	Hazro Under Vigil	64
11.	Rehatnama (Code of Conduct)	67
12.	The First Orders of House Arrest	69
13.	Kuka Postal Service	75
14.	Anandpur Hola (Satygrah)	80
15.	Deep Mala Sri Amritsar	87
16.	Tharajwala Rebellion	94
17.	Kooka Regiment Kashmir	97
18.	Amritsar Episode	101

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19. The Patriots on Gallows 111
20. On Amritsar Incident 114
21. The Raikot Case 121
22. The Martyrdoms at Malerkotla 129
23. Satguru Ram Singh Exiled 144
24. Persecution of Namdharis by the Maharaja Patiala 160
25. Punishment to the English Officers 170
26. Letter from Maharaja Patiala 173
27. Post Script 176
28. Government and Non-Government Writers 191
29. A Cursory Glance 197
30. Mata Jeewan Kaur's Gems 201
– Appendix 204
– Bibliography 207

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Foreword

India is justifiably proud of Gandhi ji and his work for the moral and political uplift of India. He has not only changed the policy and programme of the Indian National Congress and given it a new life pulsating with power and courage, but he has also changed the whole face of the Indian politics making the freedom of India a moral and political issue of the first magnitude in the international arena. This little man with a frail body whom even a girl could lift high on her shoulders has raised India higher than it ever was, during the last one hundred years.

But, as Gandhi ji has often admitted, he has built on the foundations that laid before him by his predecessors like Tilak, Gokhale, Surendra Nath Banerjee, Ferozeshah Mehta and Dadabhai Naoroji, much of his politics was derived from them. His original contribution to the India politics is the revolutionary urge, the creation of self-confidence and readiness for direct action and the spirit of self-sacrifice that direct action entails.

In this field too, though not so much well known, he had predecessors like Syed Ahmad Barelvi, Nana Fernavis, Sitabai of Jhansi and greatest of them all, Maharaj Baba Ram Singh ji of Bhaini Sahib. It is a pity that though we know so much about of our great men who trod the common path of constitutional politics like those mentioned above, so little is known of the revolutionaries who really put new life in

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the dead 'bones of the Indian politics'. 'The reason is not difficult to understand. The government of the day, our foreign masters, could tolerate even encouraged the politicians whose efforts were directed towards the beaten track of ordinary reforms and improvements; but those who wanted to overthrow the whole might of the foreign rule could not be allowed to be remembered as heroes or even Indian patriots. Not only they were persecuted, even those who admired them and their work were treated as insurgents and rebellions.

It is only recently that we could talk of Baba Ram Singh Ji with some freedom and devotion. Till yesterday his name was taboo and the community of his ardent followers, the Namdharis were treated as criminals. The law and the police were against them, and they were hunted and hounded from house to house and from village to village like members of a criminal tribe. Under the circumstances if the people did not know much about Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji and his work, it is not difficult to understand.

We are really grateful to Sant Nidhan Singh Alam of the Namdhari Darbar, who has given us the life-sketch of one of the greatest Indians of modern times. It is the first serious attempt to give us a coherent narrative, supported by documentary evidence of the life of a man who had the courage, the imagination and the capacity for organization with which only rare persons are endowed. We find in this biography working not only the religious zeal and moral earnestness of a Gandhi but also the bold practical and adventurous spirit of Neta ji.

After reading the sketch of Baba Ram Singh Ji's life, one could easily say that both Gandhi Ji and Neta Ji though both built in different moulds, got inspiration for their life-work consciously or unconsciously from this great Punjabi hero.

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We see here the germs of efforts at the moral upliftment of the masses, the creation of the spirit of self-confidence and self-sacrifice, the setting up of a parallel government with a view to oust the foreign domination, the adoption of the cult of swadeshi to free ourselves from economic serfdom, defiance and disobedience of laws that restricted our liberties and so many other items of national programme that sound so modern and effective in these days when preaching of revolution has been legalized.

Indians have yet to attain full freedom. The British have promised to quit India but they are yet to be pushed out of their comfortable seats. The study of Baba ji's life fills us with inspiration how to do that work successfully and with confidence. With this idea in mind, I commend Alam ji's book to all lovers of liberty, to all those who are anxious to see their country free.

1 January, 1947 Sd/-

Sardul Singh Caveeshar

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Introduction

It was not long after the British had taken over the reins of Punjab that a voice arose from Bhaini Aalla—a unknown village of district Ludhiana. It was: "Death is better than a life of slavery". Beware you Punjabis! Till yesterday, you were enjoying an atmosphere of freedom and today you have the albatross of slavery around your neck- the slavery to the English migrated from across the seven seas. It was yesterday only that the royal flag of freedom fluttered a top the royal fort of Lahore. The heads of the well-known European generals would bow before that flag. But today, the 'Union Jack' of the English is throwing a challenge to your self-esteem by replacing our flag. It is a sign of ignominy for you."

This voice arose from the sand dunes of Bhaini Aalla and got etched on the Punjabi psyche. It yanked out of slumber the Punjabi gone unconscious under the influence of slavery. He opened his eyes and uttered in a state of bewilderment.

"Who infused in my body this new current of life? I had really forgotten where I lay. I was not even aware of my body but now every pore of my being is throbbing with a renewed vigor. Miraculous indeed !"

This voice of the sentient being called soul was responded to as under:

"Brother Punjabi! You have really come back to a new lease of life. This renewed life is the outcome of the call of

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that Superman who has come from high heavens down to the earth to transform its destiny. He is an apostle of freedom, embodiment of compassion, unblemished moon of religion and fountainhead of peace."

The Punjabi said, "Then why does the *firangi* (white man) call him *Kooka*?"

"Simply because he has revived the dead Punjabi consciousness like a manifest messiah with a single *kook* i.e. call of his", was the instant reply.

The *firangi* (white man) had so far been having the nightmares of this *kook* only. He had lost his wits to think that it was the miracle of a single Kooka's call; what would be the destiny of his reign with the rise of lakhs of *Kookas* together. So he thought it was necessary to throttle the call of this single *Kooka* if at all he had to rule over the Punjab. He was trembling with an increased palpitation which would not allow him to sit at rest. Maybe, this call loses its force if the very source of its emergence i.e. the actual power house is shut down. He placed the call-maker under the house arrest in Bhaini Aalla (now called Bhaini Sahib) with the plea that from then onwards his call would not be allowed to spread in the country. It had instead, a reverse impact. A large number of Kookas-both men and women- set out of the villages and cities of Punjab chanting patriotic songs all the way towards Bhaini Sahib. The great leader rather availed this opportunity for organizing his followers in a disciplined manner and established a parallel government in the state.*

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* Punjab was divided into 22 parts and a governor called 'suba' was appointed for each part. It was these subas who held their own courts as no Kooka was allowed to appear in any British court. Every tehsil was given two jathedars while every village was provided a rural jathedar. The 'granthis' were posted in the dharamshalas for teaching. The Kookas established their own postal department also. It was known as 'Kooka Postal Service' in official records.

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The great leader of Kookas was known as **Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji** and the movement launched by him was called **Kooka Movement**. As it was basically based upon the holy name called *'Naam'* in religious parlance, it became venerable as Naamdhari. This movement owes its origin undeniably to the mutiny that took place in 1857AD on the day of Baisakhi but till 1863AD the British regime took it as only a religious and social movement. Its political character came to light only when Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji was on his visit to Sialkot region. On 5 April 1863, the Deputy Commissioner Sialkot Mr. Macnabb furnished his report to the government saying that a Sikh named Ram Singh is moving about in Sialkot. Aged about 50 he carries along approximately 200 Sikhs including women. He has thousands of followers. He imparts martial training to his followers with sticks, not guns and refuses to bow before any worldly ruler.

When this great leader made some revolutionizing tours all over the country the government tried to stop his way through the feudal lords, local rulers and gurdwara clergy as well. But as the upsurge of flood does not care for any of the obstacles in the way and moves ahead unstoppably, the Kooka Movement thwarted all the stratagems of British government.

The credit of launching Non-cooperation Movement against the British goes to him only. The Satyagraha (Civil Disobedience) which is supposed to be started by Mahatma Gandhi was also founded by Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji in 1867 by disobeying the government's orders openly. These were the days when Indian National Congress was not yet even born and the English were trying to establish their hold very fast in Punjab. How could they tolerate such a movement? So they tried their utmost to crush it with an iron hand. But the Kookas of those days were the men of indomitable spirit.

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They accepted with a smile the state oppression in the form of execution, blowing off with cannons and exiles but refused to yield before the might of whites.*

At last, the *Kooka* leader was arrested along with the Subas (Lieutenants or state chiefs) and put under house arrest in the Allahabad fort. The water of Ganga and Yamuna flowing by the eastern wall of the fort looked crazy to rush towards the bungalow where the great leader sat with his men singing the songs of freedom. The administration told them that the talk of freedom was ill-timed and asked them not to harp on it.

The epoch-reverser leader replied in a very sober tone

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* Immediately after establishing its control on Punjab, the British government permitted setting up butcheries and selling beef by killing the cows in all the cities of Punjab. Most unfortunately, this was started from Amritsar- the hub of Sikhism. This was also one of the prime reasons of second Anglo-Sikh battle. At the victory of the British in the first Anglo-Sikh battle, the English forces prepared beef and boasted that 'we have become able to eat beef without any fear in a land where it was not allowed at all. This hubris was what made them hasten to set up butcheries in Punjab immediately after holding its reins. It was a signal from the foreign rulers that they were free to hurt the public sentiments now. By getting the cows butchered through the Muslim butchers, they intended to trigger Hindu-Muslim discord also with a view to create a communal divide in the state. It would certainly be in their interest of expansionism. The butchery of Amritsar was a litmus test to explore the possibility of doing the same in other cities also. The Hindus and Sikhs still contained their ire and staged peaceful protests but it had no effect till 1871. Rather the butcheries were opened in some other cities also. This unwholesome stratagem of the English stirred the self-esteem of Kooka Sikhs who took it as a gesture of demeaning the Punjabis. Therefore, they came out with a drive against this sin and for saving Punjab from the very formidable consequences of this move of the whites. They had to pay for this rebellious activity with their lives, life-term and exiles. But the fortitude they exhibited by putting the noose around their necks like garland outdid even the record set by Mansoor.

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that was their national anthem and it would keep reverberating till the country became free from the chains of slavery.

The English officer warned the leader that in case of disobedience he would be sent along with his men to Kalepani (Andeman Nicobar islands).

"I am waiting for the day when I shall be exiled for the cause of liberating the country from the foreign yoke," he replied.

At last, Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji was exiled along with his Subas under Bengal Regulation Act- 1818. The walls of Bhaini Sahib were demolished with a view to crushing the Kooka Movement. The dera was destroyed by digging upto water level and its belongings were confiscated and deposited in the government's treasury while its inmates were evicted forcibly. A police post was set up at the main gate and the entry of Kookas was banned in Bhaini Sahib. Every Kooka was declared a rebel and their movement was restricted. So much so that Maharaja Patiala also supported the British government in crushing the Kooka movement. He sent his contingents and artillery to Malerkotla for killing the valiant Kookas. Who was there to raise his voice against this inhuman persecution? Neither Pundit Jawahar Lal Nehru nor his Indian National Congress was in existence anywhere at that time. This happened 13 years before the formation of Congress i.e. in 1872. Had there been Pundit Nehru (at whose bidding thousands of Azad Hind Fauj soldiers were saved from gallows of court martial) at that time, the fort situated at the banks of the holy confluence in his city would have become a centre of political pilgrimage.

They had press media been as active those days as it is today, the government would then be forced to prosecute Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji and his associates in the public court

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and the Kuka leaders may be freed. The government exiled the guru and his subas without proper trial as per law. As a result Kukas were crushed very bruitely from 1872 to 1923AD.*

It was due to the above reasons that we have failed to project the glorious history of this first freedom struggle that took place in Punjab. But we are immensely pleased to put up before the readers this brief account of Kooka Movement at the demand of public. Here is an attempt to avoid exaggeration altogether in presenting the events truthfully. The dates of happenings have been taken from the government's reports. Some of the events have been described on the basis of certification by those who were either eye witnesses themselves or heard about these from the eye witnesses.

Finally, it is humbly requested that the status of Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji and his provincial heads (Subas) should be determined on the basis of their sacrifices, virility and spirit of self-abnegation. I do not want to impose Namdhari faith on the readers but I cannot just avoid saying that any undermining statement against Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji under the sway of communal instinct would tantamount to violation of the ancient Indian and particularly Sikh ethos.

—Aalim

* It was only Pundit Moti Lal Ghosh, the Editor, Amrit Bazaar Patrika, a Calcutta based daily who wrote unsparingly about this injustice by the British government in the columns of his paper.

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A Word from the Translator

The translator is supposed to follow the first line and make sure that he does not deviate at all from the vision of the source language text-writer. While doing so he has to push aside his own views or belief system and ensure that it does not have any impact on the translated version of the script.

The translator has to keep in view his target readership. Exempli gracia, the writer of a Punjabi work whether prose or fiction has only the Punjabi readership before him. But while translating the same into English, the translator must take into consideration the sophisticated English readership. In the name of maintaining the fragrance of the original he must not make it unintelligible by rendering the folk idiom through transliteration of the same in the target language.

It becomes all the more necessary when you deal with some hagiographic kind of text. I have observed that in such books sometimes the writer goes to the extent of adding three or four honorifics to the name of the god, deity, prophet or any spiritual Master out of sheer reverence. He is justified in his own way but it would be naïve to expect the same from the translator as he has to keep in view the readership of the target language where this show of veneration may look out of place.

This book is a fine portrayal of the essentially fascist character of state. In every age of human history, the state has been unleashing a reign of terror on those who fight for their self-esteem or protection of human rights. The

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traitors in the eyes of the tyrannical state are martyrs for the supporters of those who fight for their civil liberties.

This book is an attempt to elaborate the life sketch of the Satguru Ram Singh. The Book has the material which shows the different incidents of the life of Satguru Ram Singh.

Today, people felt need to understand history of the life of Satguru Ram Singh as there are many followers of Satguru Ram Singh in all over the world. People will love the book and they will surely attract to the life of Satguru Ram Singh.

The Kuka movement and the martyred kukas has great importance in the history of freedom struggle so this book elaborates them very well.

In the end, Kuka's efforts are mentioned in detail in this book which brought changes in the society. The thoughts and appeals, which are totally authentic in nature, mentioned in this Book. Satguru Ram Singh put many efforts and brought many changes in the society.

I am gratefully thank S. Ajit Singh Ji Namdhari, vice Chairman Kuka Martyrs Memorial Trust Ludhiana, who put his great efforts to check the draft of this book word to word and line to line. It was really a difficult task. I also thankfully acknowledged the moral support and appreciation I have been receiving from S. Surinder Singh Ji Namdhari, President Vishav Namdhari Sangat. He also allow and motivate me to translate this book into English. In the end I would like to thank Honorable Vice Chancellor of the University Prof. R.P. Tiwari, who always inspired and co-operated me to enhance knowledge by undertaking creative research work related to the Namdhari studies.

—Prof. (Dr.) Kuldip Singh
Chairperson, Baba Satguru Ram Singh Chair
Central University of Punjab, Bathinda

October 2023

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

CHAPTER-1

FLASH BACK

Those were the days when Punjab was ruled by Punjabis- i.e. its own natives. It was a very prosperous region. The independent flag of Punjab fluttered majestically at top of the Lahore fort. It made everybody in Punjab feel proud. Maharaja Ranjit Singh- the pride of Punjab- used to grace the royal throne. He was known as the Lion of Punjab by the English in the East and stiff-necked *pathans* in the West. The European generals felt proud to serve him. All the communities of Punjab were fully satisfied with his egalitarian sense of justice. He considered it a sin to rule by discrimination against any of the communities viz. Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. Under his awe-inspiring rule the thieves and robbers had preferred to abandon their criminal pursuits and become his soldiers instead. People enjoyed sound sleep quite free from the fear of anti social elements. He had a coalition cabinet based not on communal sentiment but Punjabi ethos. For getting to know the weal and woe of masses he did not depend merely on the reports of his ministers; he himself would try to reach the truth by touring in disguise. He had imposed a ban on cow-slaughter in his regime. He knew that apart from religious point of view, cow was equally beneficial to all. In nutshell, Maharaja Ranjit Singh was incontestably a cynosure of all the Punjabis. The divine aura he carried dazzled the pathans on one side and the English rulers on the other.

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Unfortunately, the icy hand of death deprived the Punjabis of their beloved king on 27 June 1839. It led to the enactment of a horrible and gory drama with the consequent murder of the actual heirs to the throne and total change in the ministerial galaxy. This drama really presented a heart-rending spectacle.

Following the speedy pack up of the reign of Maharaja Kharak Singh, Maharaja Naunihal Singh and Maharaja Sher Singh, the five-year old* Maharaja Dalip Singh son of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and Maharani Jindan, was made to occupy the royal throne on 18 September 1846 AD. Taking upon themselves the responsibility of Maharaja Dalip Singh's kingdom, the English bigwigs friendly to the late Maharaja declared that they would serve as patrons to the minor king. Thanks to this patronage, Mata Jindan was separated from her son and put under house arrest in the Shekhupura Fort. Later, she was exiled and imprisoned in the forts of Banaras and Chunar.

The last court of the independent Punjab was held on 29 March 1849 at 7a.m. in the royal palace. This was the occasion when the child king Dalip Singh sat on his father's throne for the last time. All courtiers marked their attendance with withered faces. It presented a glimpse of decline from every point of view. Every chieftain was scared at heart. They were all without arms. Mr. Eliot and Sir Henry Lawrence welcomed by them on the main gate. When everybody settled comfortably in his seat it was officially declared that 'from now onwards Punjab is being annexed to the British rule. This declaration pierced the hearts of the august audience. Amidst the flow of tears Deewan Dina Nath said that the British government should exhibit a liberal attitude at this hour of crisis. It must be taken note of that following the

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* 18 September 1846 AD.

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defeat of Napoleon Bonaparte France was handed over to the actual successors of France. Then why Punjab should not be handed over to Maharaja Dalip Singh? In response he was rebuffed by Mr. Eliot saying,

> "Keep silent otherwise you will be dispatched to *Kalepani* (punishment)."

Then a document was put forward before Maharaja Dalip Singh which was signed hastily by the child king unwary of the fact that by doing this he was handing over the state of Punjab to the foreign rulers.

The court ended with this and the rising Sun of independent Punjab was eclipsed under the shadow of slavery.

After the durbar concluded, the British government declared its victory over Punjab. In the deafening thunder of cannons the flag of independent Punjab hoisted atop the fort was pulled down and flung on the ground. Now it was arrogantly replaced with the Union Jack. Beating their foreheads, the people of Lahore felt that from then onwards they had become slaves to the British Empire's Union Jack.

It was followed by the auctioning of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's *'toshakhana'* (treasure house) which used to attract the tourists from abroad. Other valuables in the form of gold, silver and gems were captured by the British government.

As per Lord Dalhousie's scheme, Maharaja Dalip Singh was exiled to Fatehgarh from Punjab on 21 December 1849. Thereafter, the unfortunate prince could never visit Punjab. The guardianship of the British was weird in the sense that not only he was ousted from his native state but on 8 March 1853 he was divested also of his religious faith for which the tenth Master, Guru Gobind Singh had sacrificed his four sons. Thereafter, Maharaja Dalip Singh was made sent to England by Ship on 19th April 1854.

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Now Punjab was a dominion of the British. Among the Sikh brave hearts, a number of them had laid down their lives to protect the sovereignty of their country while others were placed under house arrest. There were still others who were busy in getting awards and estates from the foreign rulers by betraying their own country and community. The people of Punjab were extremely disappointed at their destiny of being slaves to the whites. At times their attention was directed towards Banaras and Chunar forts imprisoning the valiant Sikhs. Given the opportunity the Sikh detainee would take solid steps for liberating their motherland so that once again their own flag of sovereignty is seen hoisted on the fort, the Punjabis felt. But their hopes were dashed to the ground when those very Sikhs who were expected to destroy the English empire helped the floundering ship of the British reach ashore. They made an object display of betrayal by cooperating with the British and going against the Indians. How shameful it was on the part of those who, prior to 1849 had their estates seized due to fighting against the English for protecting the freedom of Punjab. They preserved the values of the Khalsa institution at the cost of their assets. Also, it was they who guarded the interests of the British even after undergoing imprisonments for seven to eight years and came on the forefront of the loyalists of ruling elite by getting awards, estates etc.

Khalsa Deewan Lahore which claiming to represent all the Singh Sabhas* in 1888 treats itself as embodiment of Panth

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* Singh Sabha Lahore owes its organization under the presidency of Sardar Thakur Singh on 10 Assu, 1929 (Vikrami) at Amritsar. (*Mahan Kosh*, P. 579).

A perusal of its constitution reveals that this movement was purported to oppose naamdharis and show loyalty towards the English. Its Rule No. 6 denies membership to the Sikhs excommunicated from the Takhts and those considered inimical to the state's interests. This rule ---->

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feels proud rather than shame for its ignominious role in this regard.

He writes, "Oblivious of their history and heritage of sacrifices, the Sikhs laid down their life at the altar of loyalty towards the British Empire. They earned great repute by acting upon the Spartan gallants' ideal of 'Do or die'."*

Feeling proud of the valour of Sikhs killed in 1857AD with a view to maintaining the British rule, the stooge of the British writes,

"Where shall we find the affluent Sikh nobles who shone

<------- was esspecially for Namdhari Rule No. 7 says that the highly placed English men are eligible to become members of its Education Branch. Rule No. 9 says that Shri Guru Singh Sabha will do nothing against the government while Rule No. 10 is a pledge of allegiance towards the government.(See 'Tract Singh Sabha Lehar by Dr. Jagjit Singh, P.16-17.) Till 1886, a network of Singh Sabhas was laid throughout the country. On 30-31, 1886 AD members from various Singh Sabhas converged in Lahore and founded 'Khalsa Deewan' with (shamefully) Lieutenant Governor Punjab and India's Commander-in-Chief as Patrons. The constitution of Deewan confirmed loyalty towards the British in more articulate manner. The bye-rule of Rule No. 2 describes the aim of Khalsa Deewan as elaborating numerous blessings of the government. Further Rule No. 6 explains the aim of Deewan as inculcation of ideas in the coming generations about the progress of the Panth and building class strength which gives fillip to the concerted effort and confirms well the loyalty and sense of gratitude towards the English government. (Tract Singh Sabha Movement, P.29).This is the basic rudimentary aim and purpose of Singh Sabha and Khalsa Deewan Lahore. The control of this very Deewan was taken over on 21 September 1902 by Chief Khalsa Deewan Lahore. It means that Khalsa Deewan Lahore remained guardian of the interests of 'Panth' from 1873 to 1902 AD and thereafter this degree was taken by Chief Khalsa Deewan. On 16 November 1888 AD, Khalsa Deewan Lahore had presented this farewell address on the occasion of bidding farewell to Lord Dufferin, the Viceroy of India at about 4 PM before he was to leave for England.

* True Copy of the address page 24.

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in the British crown like gems in 1850 and where are those Sikh youths who had united at once in 1857 for sacrificing their lives in favour of the British masters."

Expressing the Sikhs' devotion towards the British regime in 1857, he writes:

"The Sikhs have come out with grand success even from the toughest ordeals of life. They came out with a brilliant testimony to their allegiance towards their king even on the historical occasion of 1857 mutiny.

This period was very horrible (for the English). The government of India was passing through such a critical phase at that time which had so far been unprecedented for it. The Sikhs stood by their masters (the English) very firmly at that time. We cannot eulogise their bravery in a better way than we did in an article published in the Civil Military Gazette issue of 31 August 1887. Here is a reference to this effect:

"This was a very crucial period. The army raised by the English authorities rose in rebellion against their very masters. They resolved to exterminate the British from India the way Pundit Pars Ram had done for uprooting the Khatri rule in ancient era time.

Therefore, they rushed towards Delhi and gathered around the Mughal king who fed them on false hopes that his reign would be established soon.

It was not easy to remain stable in such a volatile situation when one heard the news about the macabre killings of European women and children as also about the betrayal of so-called friends every day. The forces of prominent leaders of central India had joined hands with the mutineers and the country as a whole beyond Ambala presented a look of desolation and slaughter house.

It was during such grim circumstances that the Sikh chieftains' timely help brought them closest to the Queen as

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the most trusted minions of the forefront (P.23-24). This trend has been elaborated by the historian of a book 'Punjab Rajas'.

The signatures of the following representatives are available on the address from which the above facts have been taken:

NAME	REPRESENTATIVE
(1) Sr. Attar Singh K.C.I.E. Bhadaur	Patron, Khalsa Deewan
(2) Sardar Dharam Singh, President	Noble, Gharjaakh
(3) Bhai Jawahar Singh, Vice President	Khalsa Deewan
(4) Bhai Nikka Singh	Singh Sabha, Lahore
(5) Bhai Mayya Singh, Secretary	-----do-----
(6) Bhai Narain Singh, Rias Bagrhian	Singh Sabha Ludhiana
(7) Bhai Gajjan Singh, Vice President	-----do-----
(8) Bhai Amar Singh, Secretary	-----do-----
(9) Mahant Prem Singh, President	Singh Sabha Sialkot
(10) Sr. Hari Singh	-----do-----
(11) Chaudhary Budh Singh, Vice President.	-----do-----
(12) Bhai Sohan Singh, Secretary	-----do-----
(13) Sr. Narain Singh, President	Singh Sabha, Ferozepur
(14) Bhai Uttam Singh Vice President	-----do-----
(15) Sr. Lehna Singh, President	Singh Sabha Khumano
(16) Sr. Shivdev Singh, President	-----do-----Laddhran
(17) Bhai Nihal Singh, Secretary	-----do-----
(18) Sr. Jiwan Singh, President	-----do-----Tarn Taran
(19) Bhai Sewa Singh, Secretary	-----do-----
(20) Bhai Suchet Singh, Secretary	Singh Sabha Rajpura
(21) Bhai Jati Singh, Secretary	-----do-----
(22) Sr. Gulab Singh, President	-----do-----Hoshiarpur
(23) Bhai Gopal Singh, Secretary	-----do-----
(24) Bhai Pala Singh, President	Singh Sabha, Khanna
(25) Bhai Sahib Singh, Secretary	-----do-----
(26) Bhai Aaya Singh, Vice President	Singh Sabha Maghiana

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(27) Bhai Tara Singh, Secretary	-----do-----
(28) Sr. Gian Singh, Secretary	Singh Sabha Patiala
(29) Kotwal Daya Singh, Secretary	-----do-----
(30) Sodhi......	-----do-----
(31) Kishan Singh	-----do-----
(32) Bhai Atar Singh Giani	-----do-----
(33) Daroga Nand Singh, President	-----do-----Ambala
(34) Sr. Lehna Singh, Vice President	-----do-----
(35) Bhai Gurmukh Singh, Secretary	-----do-----
(36) Sr. Harnam Singh, President	-----do-----Shimla
(37) Bhai Amar Singh, Secretary	-----do-----
(38) Bhai Sampooran Singh, President	-----do-----Salaudi
(39) Bhai Ranjit Singh, Secretary	-----do-----Dandpur
(40) Bhai Maan Singh, Secretary	-----do-----Ropar
(41) Bhai Lehna Singh, President	-----do-----Modey
(42) Mahant Thakur Singh, President	-----do-----Chamkaur Sahib
(43) Bhai Atar Singh, Manager	-----do-----Jalandhar
(44) Bhai Basant Singh, President	-----do-----Koita (Baluchistan)
(45) Bhai Suba Singh, President	-----do-----Bhinder
(46) Babu Panna Singh, President	-----do-----Kalka
(47) ------President	-----do-----Ajmer Rajputana
(48) -------President	-----do-----Nadari, NWP
(49) -------President	---do---Sakkhar Sindh

Sd/- Gurmukh Singh,
(Chief Secretary, KhalsaDeewan)

There can be nothing more ignominious than the way servility and loyalty of Sikh nobles towards the British has been gloriously described eight years after the pack-up of the Sikh rule. They have been projected as cringing before their masters for achieving something in lieu of this impeccable fidelity. These self-styled leaders of Sikhism have

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denigrated the Maharaja Dalip Singh saying that they have pooh-poohed the pseudo claims of Dalip Singh and expressed satisfaction over the British rule over them. Sikhs should be trusted that in the absence of education and other where withal they have heaped praises on the generosity of the English rule and understood well that they can prosper properly under their rule only. And, when they compare their condition with that prevailing during Sikh rule they find that the English behave well with them. Setting aside the history, the existing riyasats (princely states) prove that no state has ever given a pat to the Sikhs and they have always been subjected to a treatment of apathy and scorn. A brief glimpse over the situation will make the picture clear. The Sikhs were not even one third of the high ranking posts in administrative set up. In English rule they were held at par with people of other faiths while they were given some respectable positions in civil and military administration.

(3) The followers of no other community or religious faith had to undergo so tough ordeals. While the mughals and peshwas had no successor of their own, the Sikhs had Dalip Singh who with the connivance of Russia, sought their support. But the Sikhs were dying to support the Queen rather than accepting Dalip Singh as their king. (p.24)*

As compared to the English regime, the contemporary Sikh leaders condemned the erstwhile Sikh rule and existing Sikh riyasats. They said to Lord Dufferin, "The fulfilment of their needs and redressing their weaknesses would make them wealthier, courteous, civilized, wise, learned and stronger. Thus they will become and remain forever the staunch followers of the British rule." (p. 25)**

A reference to the letter implying the call hinted at in

* Tract Singh Sabha Movement, Dr. Jagjit Singh Taran Taaran.

** Ibid, p. 61.

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these lines excerpted from the address would appeal to the readers. The letter under reference had been written to these by the Maharaja mistaking them as leaders of the community.

Maharaja Dalip Singh's Letter*

London

25 March, 1886.

Dear Countrymen!

I had no desire to come and get settled in India. But God is the creator of all. He is mightier than all of us. I am a poor weakling strayed from his path. Despite having no wish of my own, I will come to India under the will of providence and live like an ordinary person. I bow my head before the Divine Will. And, this is what will govern my will.

Dear Khalsa ji! I seek your forgiveness for abandoning my hereditary faith and switching over to Christianity. At the time of proselytization I was very small. I will reach Bombay and get back to Sikhism and tread the path shown by Guru Nanak Dev and Guru Gobind Singh.

In spite of having a very strong urge within, I won't be able to meet you by coming to Punjab. This is what made me write this letter to you. I have been properly remunerated for my faithfulness towards the Queen.

Waheguru ji ka Khalsa, Waheguru ji ki Fateh!

My countrymen! I remain your own flesh and blood,

Dalip Singh.

Having read this letter, these self-styled leaders of religion wrote to Lord Dufferin:

"If the Maharaja comes here, the situation in Punjab will deteriorate and once the situation worsens it will be difficult to tame the Sikhs gone berserk. Under this pretext, the

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* Tract Singh Sabha Movement, Dr. Jagjit Singh Taran Taaran, pp. 58-61

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Viceroy detained the Maharaja in Eden and he had to stay there."*

"Maharaja Dalip Singh never expected this kind of behaviour. Then on 20 June 1889, he wrote to the leadership with an appeal that if the Indians contribute one paisa and punjabi one *anna* per month to him, he could come to India to claim his lost empire with cooperation from Russia."**

The Sikh Nobles' Reply to the Maharaja's Letter (30 October, 1889)

We, the Khalsa Panth and residents of Gujjranwala- with whom you connect your umbilical cord are hereby replying to your letter. You have not done well by revolting against the British rule. Whosoever has a little bit of sensibility will not even think of coming to your help. And, don't expect any support from our side also. (Tract Singh Sabha, p. 61)

Although such stooges of the whites have panegyrised the British regime under the temptation of gaining power and pelf yet no patriotic devotee of the Panth can help shedding tears on their lack of self-esteem. The true Sikhs feel that had these sycophants done their bounden duty for liberating the country rather than supporting the British, they would have their names recorded in the list of those who laid down their lives for the sake of their country. In that case, their progeny could feel proud of its forbears.

So far as the contemporary political situation is concerned the organization had disintegrated. The grain of dignity had disappeared altogether from the community thanks to the disloyalties of Dhyan Singh Dogra, Teja Singh and Lal Singh. The patriotic Sikhs dedicated to Panth no longer existed. The

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* Tract Singh Sabha Movement, Dr. Jagjit Singh Taran Taaran, p. 61

** Life of Sir Sundar Singh Majitha, S. Mehar Singh 'Rawel' Editor 'Khalsa Advocate', Amritsar, p. 13.

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community had lost the spirit of reinvigorating itself nor did it have the requisite sources for the same.* This is just a specimen of the political climate of those days. Not just Sikhs, the Punjab as a whole had died in a way.

Social and Religious Plight

Along with political degradation, even the social and religious condition of the country was facing a steep decline. The condition of Sikh and non-Sikh population had become identical to that of a patient on deathbed. The killing and selling of girls was in vogue due to the pressure of irrelevant rites and rituals. Due to the custom of child marriage, the number of child or young widows was increasing day by day. There being societal ban on widow re-marriage, thousands of girls were forced to lead a life of misery. As regards Sikhism, history reveals that:

(1) After the Khalsa was divested of political power, Sikhism had come under cloud.

(2) During the first census, Sikhism was being suppressed by extraneous factors. It seemed that the Khalsa would not be able to recoup its status again. As a result the Sikhs whose progeny was deprived of undergoing formal initiation in to the Sikh fold had reached a state of nonentity.**

(3) Sikhism and its tenets were heading rapidly towards a stage where their political power had already drained out.***

(4) During Maharaja Ranjit Singh's time when the Sikhs were well-equipped with spiritual zeal and self-esteem which is typical of a living community the

* A Short History of the Sikhs, C.H. Pane, p. 622.

** Sir Lepel Griffer, Ranjit Singh, p. 26.

*** Censos Report of Hindustan, 1931 Vol. 17, Bab 1, p. 305

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number of devoted Sikhs was more than one could imagine but with the annexation of Punjab with the English rule, the Sikhs lost its sense of self-esteem. The Khalsa fell on the ground so abysmally that it could not get on its feet again.*

(5) After the dwindling away of Sikh Empire, the Panth invited on it an avalanche of calamities. On one hand the strategy of the English worked successfully with the result that hundreds of Sikh nobles were ruined. A large number of them were busy garnering awards and estates from the English in lieu of their loyalties. The famous Sikh shrines like Golden Temple Amritsar, Akal Takht, Tarn Taran etc. had slipped into the hands of this very government. On the other hand, the government was intolerably invasive on Sikhism through the priests. The Sikhs were inveigled in more than one ways to swerve from their righteous path of Sikhism. The ideal state of Punjabis was being defamed as daku raj i.e. the reign of dacoits. Through damaging propaganda against the Khalsa Panth, the very foundation of the citadel of Sikhism was, in a way, being stuffed with gun-powder. The Sikhs were being made to give up their discipline by terror, guile or avarice. The utilitarian Sikhs who enjoyed every pleasure as well-harnessed Sikhs during the Sikh rule became the devotees of Lord Rama and Jesus Christ within no time. This political onslaught brought autumn in the garden of Sikhism during the spring season. As a result, the increasing number of Sikhs started declining abysmally. **

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* English Book—"Sikhs" Captain A.H. Bingle, 7, compiled by Bengal Infantory, p. 56.

** Tract Singh Sabha Lehar, p. 6.

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(6) The country had passed through various changes and the Sikh forces had disintegrated.. The western civilization had started taking long strides in India and thrown a pall of gloom on Sikhism for some time.*

(7) The religious and community life of Sikhs were ruined.**

(8) The Sikhs had blended into dust their ethics, amity and sanctity and their food habits and way of dressing had gone quite contrary to the Sikh praxis. Although they were the Sikhs with 'Singh' suffixed to their names but they had no qualms of conscience while destroying the very spirit of Sikhism with the dagger of their misconduct. Thinking ill of others and deriving pleasure out of misdeeds had become their nature. They had abandoned reciting gurbani and remembering the name of God altogether.***

(9) The Sikhs kept themselves, their women and children well bedecked. They served them with whatever was demanded. But if the aged parents put forward any demand regarding food or clothing they were snubbed with the scathing words that no bundles of money were kept in the house for them.**** Also, they became womanizers and avoided even casting a loving look at their own women. Thus they preferred feeding crows with over swans. They developed a passion for the prostitutes and gifted ornaments to them. The scholars were very shamefully insulted and

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* Thesis on the Namdhari Movement, p. 23

** Prof. Ruchi Ram Sahni, Gurdwara Reforms Movement and Sikh Awakening, p. 34

***Giani Gian Singh, Sri Guru Panth Parkash, Ed.3, p. 937

****Giani Gian Singh, Sri Guru Panth Parkash, Ed.3, pp. 937-938.

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the dullards were given a lot of respect. They treated the Brahmins scornfully.*

(10) The youngsters whose elders would wake up in the ambrosial hour and avoided eating anything without having a glimpse of Guru Granth Sahib did not even look at the Holy Granth with the result that the rats nibbled its pages. The Sikhs neither recited Japuji nor *Rehraas*; they rather ridiculed the ones who did so with the plea, "Is God deaf?"

The Plight of India

There is a lot of unity between the basic theories of both Hindus and Sikhs e.g. theism, incarnation, transmigration of soul and cow protection etc. The rites of birth and death, the avatars, sages and seers, seasonal festivals like Sangraand, full-moon nights, moonless nights etc. are common between both Hindus and Sikhs. The literary personalities and literature are the same. Therefore so far as religious and social rites and rituals are concerned, both the communities cannot remain aloof from the changes that occur with time. The time under reference here did not have any line of division between Hindus and Sikhs. Both were equally susceptible to social evils like killing girls and exhange/barter of girls. Ban of widow-remarriage had made the condition of Hindu society rather more miserable than that of the Sikhs.

Child marriages enfeebled the Hindu society in a big way. Almost, both the communities were sailing in the same boat due to their deep social bonding.

Need for a Great Leader

In such times of crisis, people need someone who should serve as light house and steer the community out of the

* Giani Gian Singh, Sri Guru Panth Parkash, Ed.3, pp. 937-938.

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tumultuous situations and rescuing it from the fury of the surging tide lead it to the shore. History stands testimony to the fact that as and when some country or community found itself mired in such a crisis some epoch reverser personality came to the fore for helping the mankind out of the pitiable situation.* The religious books use the words like nabi, rasool, paighambar, satiguru, avatar. In Sikhism, the word gur-avtar is used.**

Such great souls are vulnerable to the slanderous tongue of the people with jaundiced view. They satisfy their urge by levelling a number of allegations on them and condemning them in more than one ways. But the devoted and right-thinking people care three hoots for them.

The great soul who took upon himself the responsibility of the countrymen and community on his shoulders in such a grim situation is known as Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji and the reformative (read transformative) movement he pioneered is called Kooka Movement. The names like Namdhari and Sant Khalsa were also used for this very movement.

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* Gita says with regard to this doctrine-
"O Arjuna! As and when there is loss of religion, when the iniquity increases, I come in the world to protect the gentlemen, destroy the wicked and establish the supremacy of religion. (Sloka, 4 and 7-8)

** *Jug gardi jab hovahe ulte jug kya hoi vartara.*
Uthe gilani jagat vich varte paap bhrasht sansara..
Varna varan na bhaavani kheh kheh jalan baans angyara.
Ninda chaale bed ki samjhe nahi agyan gubara.
Bed granth gur hatt hai jis lag bhavjal par utara.
Satigur baajh na bujhiye jichar dhare na gur avtara."
Var Bhai Gurdas, Var-1, Pauri 17.

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Chapter- 2
Life in Brief

Parkash (Incarnation)

Sri Satguru Ram Singh was born in 1816 AD (1872 Bikrami) between the night of Magh sudhi Panchmi and Chatti, thursday; in a small village Raiyan Bhaini (now Bhaini Sahib) of district Ludhiana. He chose the house of a poor carpenter of Baba Jassa Singh for his birth. The name of his mother was Mai Sada Kaur. Baba Budh Singh*, his only brother was four years younger to him. He was married to Mata Jassan from village Dharaur District Ludhiana. He had two daughters Bibi Nandan and Daya Kaur from this wedlock.

In Sikh Army

From 1837 AD (1894 Bikrami) to 1854AD (1902 Bikrami), he served in Naunihal Singh Regiment of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's army.

In Hazro

In 1841 AD while travelling to Pishaur with his platoon on some errand he stayed in Hazro city on the way. During those days, Sri Guru Baba Balak Singh was showering his blessings on his devotees through his sermon preaching. As

* As per the saying of Satguru Ram Singh, Baba Budh Singh Ji was popularly known as Satguru Hari Singh.

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he came to know about this, he approached the Baba's feet and got initiated into his fold. After discharging his official duty he went back to Lahore.

A Feel of Panthic Degradation

While in army he had realized that the Sikhs who ruled over Punjab failed in observance of the moral values most expected of them. The element of spirituality was missing altogether from their physical frames. Their spirit had soared to some other realms. He was eyewitness to the heart-rending spectacle of disintegration in the wake of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's death. Therefore, he had told his colleagues and seniors- not once but several times- that the Sikh spirit is badly polluted now; therefore in the given situation, the Sikh rule was heading fast towards instability. Once again he went to Hazron and seeking blessings from Baba Balak Nath, he came back to Lahore.

The Muddaki Battle

The first Anglo-Sikh Battle started at Muddaki on 18 December 1845 AD. Since the Sikh nobles held him in high esteem, therefore he was asked to pray for the Sikhs' victory. But he predicted that come what may, the Sikhs could not win.

To Bhaini Sahib

Due to his remaining engrossed in meditation and sometimes issuing divine statements he was freed from duty very respectfully. Therefore, after saying good bye to the job, he came to his village.

The Construction of Dera (Seminary)

After having spent some time with his father in domestic pursuits, he set up a dera at Bhaini Ala. Its fame crossed the

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boundaries of India over to the walls of India Office London.

Thereafter, due to his love for Khazan Singh son of his uncle (mama) Hari Singh he stayed for some time in the Ferozepur Fort where he supervised the construction work going on in the fort at that time. He started the flow of gurbani among the seekers.

Elevation to the Spiritual Seat

When he had gone to Guru Balak Singh Ji in 1841AD at Hazron, the Master had asked him to gird up his loins for ameliorating the condition of the community and the country. "It is now your responsibility to maintain the garden of our community turned desolate at the hands of the British. So long as a country remains under the yoke of foreign forces, it cannot make spiritual, economic, social and political progress. Therefore, the need of the day is to free the country from the slavery of the British.

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Chapter-3

The Formation of Sant Khalsa

After coming back the Sri Satguru Ji set up a shop in Sri Bhaini Sahib. But he spent most of his time meditation and recitation of gurbani. Whatever little profit the shop yielded was used for running household expenses and extending a little bit of hospitality to the visitors. His own experience coupled with Guru Balak Singh's preaching on the plight of India was a great stimulus for him to establish a social order which should be able to shoulder the responsibility of serving the country and bring about total transformation. He was swayed by such a surge of emotion which should carry away with it every kind of evils afflicting the country. Therefore, like the tenth Master Guru Gobind Singh he also chose the day of Baisakhi to initiate this Herculean task. That Baisakhi was of samvat 1756 bikrami, and this was of 1914 (bikrami). In other words, exactly 158 years after the tenth guru had laid the foundation of Khalsa Panth, Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji founded the mission that was known by the names like *Namdhari Panth, Sant Khalsa* and *Kooka Panth* etc. It was called 'Namdhari' because of reciting the name of God, *'Sant Khalsa'* due to plenty of virtuosity and *'Kooka'* for having given a *'kook'* (war cry) for freedom. First of all he initiated the following five persons by administering *Amrit* to them:

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(1) Kahan Singh Nihang (2) Labh Singh Ragi (3) Atma Singh (4) Naina Singh (5) Sudh Singh.§

After, taking them into Namdhari fold, they were dictated to adopt and propagate the following ethical code:

(1) **Moral:** Abstinence of meat, liquor and falsehood, abstinence from levying interest in cash or kind on borrowings etc.

(2) **Social:** Total prohibition on killing daughters, selling the girls, exchange kinship, child marriage* and dowry**. Permission for widow re-marriage and ban on castration of oxen.

(3) **Religious:** Having bath including washing of hair at the ambrosial hour before recitation of gurbani,

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§ (1) He belonged to village Chakk Kalan, riyasat Malerkotla. He was one of the satguru's colleagues in the army and had become his follower during service. After Muddaki battle he had gone to Bhaini Sahib.

(2) He was a famous raagi (devotional musician) from Amritsar. One night he had an oracle that for meeting the guru, he should go to Bhaini Sahib.

(3) He was a renowned scholar of village Aalo Mahar in district Sialkot. He had reached Bhaini Sahib in quest of the perfect guru

(4) He belonged to village Wariah, tehsil Tarn Taran, district, Amritsar. He also had an acute craving for meeting the true Master. So having heard from Baba Labh Singh, he also went to Bhaini Sahib and was bestowed with the satguru's blessings.

(5) He was from village Durgapur of district Jalandhar.

* Regarding child marriage the Master had prohibited marriage of daughters below the age of 14-15 years.

** The followers of the sect were directed to spend as less as possible on weddings. On the occasion of 1940 AD the satguru Partap Singh announced that all namdharis would solemnize the weddings of their children in the melas (fairs). Nobody was allowed to spend more than 13 rupees on wedding. He could do it within one rupee and twenty five paisa also. If the parents could not afford even this much, it could be taken from the guru's coffers also.

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simple apparel and sporting round turban. Keeping woollen rosary, keeping prayer mat, wearing wooden shoes, maintaining perfect cleanliness, hospitality, cow protection, holding yajanas, wearing 5 k's and observing non-violence.

(4) Political: The political directives included:

- Don't join government service
-Don't admit your kids in government schools
- Settle your disputes in your panchayats only.
- Use Indian commodities only
- Boycott the government's postal system
- Don't board a train as far as possible.

The initially baptised Sikhs abided by these directions very meticulously. Naam i.e. the name of God and contemplation on gurbani enkindled a consciousness in them. It brought about a thaw in their inert selves. They carried with them the fragrance of naam wherever they went and attracted whosoever came in contact with them. The praise of the Master from their lips urged the people to flock to Bhaini Sahib. Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji also started visiting the nearby villages. It started with visit to Mutthadda Kalan in district Jalandhar and Dhuleta. Later he brought hundreds of men and women from Samrala, Raipur, Lohgarh and Gujjarwal* villages of district Ludhiana into the namdhari fold. This area was plagued with the evil of daughter-killing both among Hindus and Sikhs. It may be noted that due to the rampant custom of dowry including expensive clothes, ornaments etc. made the poor kill their daughters at the time of birth.

The satguru raised his voice fervently against this evil

* Chain Singh of Gujjarwal and his sister Karmo also became satguru's devotees.

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which made a large number of Hindus and Sikhs from Grewal to give up this practice. In village Raipur, Darbara Singh took the Master to his home and conferred hospitality on him. Several Grewals became his disciples and abandoned the evil practices.

The 'Sutra'

The satguru's followers performed *kirtan* with *dholkis* and cymbals. They would slide into a trance like state with the tinge of naam and bani. In Sufism this state is known as *'wajad'* or *'hal'* but in namdhari sect it is called *'sutra'*. One day he was face to face with his devotees at Lohgarh when the village residents said that they had not experienced sutra so far. Guru Ji said, "do not take Sutra as false." Thereafter, whenever a congregation was held in the village, some of the devotees would go unconscious under this state of consciousness while some others would wax emotional and still others start dancing. Dulo Bharai of Lohgarh and Sobhe of the Chamiar village would slip into the 'sutra' state and keep lying unconscious for days together.

The Naam Addiction and Dhaukal Singh

When satguru was at Raipur, an addict came to him saying,

> "Holy man! I need a seer of *post* (poppy husk) half kilogram *sukha* (hemp) and a *chhataank* (1/16th. of a seer, almost two ounces) of opium."

Sri Satguru ji said, "But I have the opiate of 'naam' only. If you need it, then go and come back after taking bath. When he came back after bath the Master whispered something into his ear and he became disenchanted with drugs. Back home he broke into pieces the pestle and mortar used for preparing the intoxicant. Thereafter he took the 'amrit' and

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became a devote Sikh. The satguru named him Dhaukal Singh who turned out to be a very dedicated disciple equipped with perseverance and fortitude.

Bhai Jawahar Singh Nirmale

Baba Jawahar Singh was a saint of very detached propensities. Having heard about the spiritual stature of the satguru, he reached Bhaini Sahib for a glimpse of the master and came across a tall gentleman going outside carrying a *garva* (a pitcher-shaped small metal-vessel) full of water for answering the call of nature. He bowed and touched the feet of the saint who asked him about the satguru.

"Please come with me you holy man," the tall gentleman said. The visitor followed him to the *deodhi* (ante-chamber) where an old woman sat on a bed looking outwards from the door. She also touched the saint's feet and made him sit comfortably on the bed. Then some women came to wash the saint's feet and served food to him.

"I am very eager to have a glimpse of the satguru," the ochre-robed visitor said.

Now he was taken to the temple. To his utter astonishment he saw that the man who sat in medication in the temple was the same who had escorted him inside and he was the Master i.e. Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji- he sought to meet. Having captured his heartfelt wish he had come out to welcome the visitor under the pretext of going out for easing himself. He kept beseeching initiation for nine days but the satguru kept putting him off. However, at last he fulfilled the wish of the visitor saint on tenth day. This Baba Jawahar Singh turned out to be a great name in the namdhari sect. He will be discussed further ahead in the book.

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Chapter-4

Ardh-Kumbhi Fair in Haridwar
(1918 Bikrami-1861 AD)

It was ardh-Kumbhi fair in Haridwar on 1 Baisakh, 1918 Bikrami. The satguru moved about freely in his own mood-loins draped in a *kachhehra*, a piece of cloth covering his head and wooden sandals in the name of footwear- during these days. It was a wonderful sight. As he reached the bank of river Yamuna, an old woman of dark complexion came to him. She had no clothing and looked very famished and starved. The satguru said to his followers,

"If someone wants to donate he should give it to her, she is the real Yamuna."

Mai Sahib Kaur

Mai Sahib Kaur was a resident of village Padhri in district Amritsar. She was well versed in Vedant. As per her essential nature she started talking to the satguru also on the issue of Vedant. But the satguru asked her to sing hymns instead.

"When there is Brahma (God) immanent in every mote of dust then who should sing hymns and in whose glory?" She said.

"Okay, I will test your Brahma tomorrow," replied the satguru.

Next morning a pile of firewood was structured to make a pyre. Mai Sahib Kaur reached with a 2½ year old boy in

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her lap and touched the Master's feet. The devotees had thronged to the site in large numbers. The woman was made to sit on the pyre which was lit. Within no time the flames were seen rising high upwards.

The satguru immediately threw his black blanket on her. Some of the onlookers ran away in panic but the ones with firm faith kept standing there. The woman who had already received the chant from the satguru kept reciting it. The heap of firewood turned into ash but the woman and her child came out unhurt from the pyre. A number of visitors who witnessed this miracle fell at the satguru's feet and joined the namdhari sect. Some other miracles of this kind are also famous in this regard but these are not being included here to avoid unnecessary details.*

* Mai Sahib Kaur herself had told this incident to the Satguru Partap Singh in 1964 Bikrami (1907 AD). Now her grandsons Harnam Singh and Khazan Singh are the names of prominence among the namdhari Sikhs.

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Chapter-5

Deepawali (Illuminnation) of 1919 Bikrami (1862 AD)

Sri Satguru Ji while blessings the followers of Doab reached Amritsar on the festival of Deepmala (Diwali) at the time of illumination called Deep Mala i.e. string of lamps in common parlance. A large number of men and women had a realization of peace by listening to him. The curious ones asked him basic chant and turned Kookas by taking amrit. Whosoever had the divine blow into his ear from the satguru was transported to a world of ecstasy. It became a word of the mouth in villages and towns around that the real Master has appeared. Also, it was a cause of great anxiety for the hypocrites masquerading as saints. Particularly, the mahants of gurdwaras and deras were the most worried lot. From them also, the ones with good moral conduct were quite happy to have a glimpse of the satguru. The priests of Durbar Sahib and Akal Bunga were boiling with rage from within. Preaching of the satguru was having its diminishing effect on people's inclination towards the priest class. It was bound to affect their income and prestige as well. Therefore, they were out to spread a lot of rumours against Satguru Ji and Namdhari Sikhs. But false propaganda stands nowhere before truth. Some people are of the view that the satguru had an altercation with the clergy of Akal Bunga over this deep-mala. Maybe there erupted some minor difference of

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opinion over this issue but there is no testimony of there being any serious dispute between them.

From Amritsar, the satguru reached Nankana Sahib and blessed the devotees all the way he reached Wazirabad for going ahead to Hazron. Here he came to know that Guru Balak Singh had passed away on Maghar Sudi Poornima 1919AD. Also, he met the devotees coming with the ashes of Guru Balak Singh. Therefore he returned from there reached Gill via villages Sambhrial and Chawinda Bajwa. Baba Jameet Singh of Gill felt greatly blessed to see him. He too had got the secret chant from Guru Balak Singh. He experienced a state of ecstasy after meeting the satguru.

"The Holy Master! So far I had treated you as gur-bhai (disciple of the same guru) only but now I see manifested in you the spirit of Guru Balak Singh. Thereafter, touring through Majha and Malwa regions he reached Bhaini Sahib.

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Chapter-6

The Impact of Propagation up to 1863 AD

By 1863, the preaching and social reforms introduced by the satguru had gained popularity throughout the country. The social reform drive was going very smooth and the centuries old traditions were succumbing to this movement. The men with demonic propensities who were addicted to opium and indulged in crimes like theft were now turning into gentle citizens by giving up these pursuits.* Widow-remarriage had been under ban for long with the result that thousands of young widows in the country were leading a life of suffocation within the four walls of their houses. In a way they were inching towards death in a slow but steady manner. But the preaching of the satguru cut asunder their chains of this unique 'house-arrest'. Although this kind of iconoclasm met with very tough resistance at the initial stage but by and by, the people came to realize that this freedom of remarriage to the widows could pave way for the emancipation of our country from so many troubles and set it on the track of progress. This reform had a great impact on both Hindus and Sikhs. The evil practice of killing or selling

* Giani Gian Singh, the author of Guru Panth Parkash writes that the satguru made those with shorn hair keep long hair, take amrit and become initiated Sikhs. Also, he adjured them to give up intoxicants like tobacco, cannabis, poppy etc. and motivated them to abandon alcoholism and taking non-vegetarian food. Sri Guru Panth Parkash, 1889, Kabit 7.

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girls disappeared to a great extent and the malpractice of child-marriage was also stopped by the Master with great effort.

The practice of worshipping, joining *keertan* and reciting the holy name of God gained more and more popularity. The country witnessed such a pleasant change in the society that the people following the voice of sanity described it as a venture of heralding the era of *satyuga* in *kaliyuga* by Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji. The expanse of finer tendencies (symbolised by *satyuga*) instilled a sense of fear in the minds of those who represented *kaliyuga*. They vainly tried to place a number of obstacles on this path. By this time the Kooka Movement had established itself in a big way in Punjab and there was not even a single area where the efforts of Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji and his Namdhari Panth were not eulogised. Religious congregations were held in village after village and the notes of keertan flowed freely in the environment. It seemed as if Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji had infused a new life in the main body of Sikh community which over the period seemed to have become lifeless. Now Sikhism was in a position to give a new lease of life to others as well. Unlike today, there was no communal divide between Hindus and Sikhs during those times. The Hindus who joined the Sikh fold by taking amrit were called *sehajdhari* Sikhs. It would bring about a total change in their ways and manners. So they were treated like *sadhus* by the people in general. In other words, the most benefitted among the beneficiaries of Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji were the Hindus. They included some Sikhs who were Sikhs just from the outer look-quite unaware of Sikh way of life and the social norms of the guru. Although, the teachings of the satguru attracted the Muslims also yet, they formed just a microscopic minority.*

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* Many Muslim become the followers of Satguru Ram Singh including a known 'Peer' at Kasur.

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Till now, the satguru was known to be a socio-religious reformer only. That is why the English government was apathetic towards his activities. Although his way of living and distinct method of propagation were damaging in the long run to the western civilisation and European culture yet the impression of his being social and religious reformer restrained British government from taking any action against him.

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Chapter-7

Kooka Movement in the Eyes of Government

After the brief account of the impact of Kooka Movement till 1863, it becomes pertinent to explain that during this very year some British officers submitted such reports regarding the leader of this Movement to the government. They expressed their apprehensions that though his preachings apparently social and religious. It is creating disturbances and unrest in public mind and the leader tends to turn political.

The First Report

The first report in this concern was furnished by the Deputy Commissioner Sialkot Mr. Macnabb. He presented the satguru in political colours saying,

> "An elderly Sikh of Ludhiana, calling himself 'Bhai', was going about the country with 200 men, whom he drilled at night with sticks instead of muskets: that he boasted of 5000 followers* and obeyed no 'Hakim'. The purposed going with a lot of women, who were also of the party, to the Baisakhi fair at Amritsar.**"

* The number of followers reported here belongs not to Punjab as a whole but district Sialkot only.

** Kuka documents, p. 3

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Amritsar Baisakhi Fair

As per official reports the Sri Satguru ji went to Amritsar on 11 April 1863AD with his followers. As per directives of Lt. Governor Punjab, Major McAndrews, the Deputy Inspector General Police, Lahore Circle, Major Mercer, Deputy Commissioner Amritsar and District Superintendent Police met with the "Satguru Ji". He was entrusted the task of ascertaining the aims and intentions of the Master. Major Mercer's report says that Major Mac was swept off by the charismatic aura of the holy man's personality as he saw him. The satguru's words smacked of no rebellion at all. Mercer writes, "His disciples are very hale and hearty. There was not even a trace of revolt in his speech. He appeared to be very calm and sober in temperament. Therefore it was not deemed fit to interfere with his affairs in the fair."*

Right of Taking, the Amrit to Women

After propagation of the nectarine quality of *naam* in Amritsar, the satguru toured first to Doaba region and then to Malwa. During this tour he introduced two new traditions: (1) Administering amrit to women and (2) Introduction of Anand Karaj tradition for Sikh weddings. Earlier, women had been denied the right to take amrit but Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji decided to bring women at par with men on this count. He himself administered amrit to women and initiated them into namdhari fold. They abdicated all the ornaments and put on simple clothes. They started taking daily bath along with a daily washing of their hair. Some people did not like it in the beginning but they were told that since the children had the deepest impact of their mother her life has to be most nectarine. The sweet and pleasant words of the

* Kooka documents, p. 3.

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satguru pleased everybody. Now men and women in thousands started receiving the secret chant of initiation and take amrit. In imitation, their children also followed suit and had amrit and started repeating the history of Dhru and Bhagat Prahlad. How can *kaliyuga* live in a home where the children and their parents are blessed by nature ? Only religious faith and virtue reign there. The flow of divine notes of naam and *satsang* (religious congregation) relieves the home of all discord and purges the mind of all vice. It gives way to flourishing of compassion and contentment which spread their fragrance all around.

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Chapter-8

Khote Fair and Anand Karaj Tradition Introduced

While on tour to the Malwa region of Punjab, the satguru reached the village Khote on 2 June 1863 AD. This date being pre-scheduled, the devotees thronged there in thousands. He was here when the satguru introduced the new tradition of Anand Karaj for Sikh weddings. Prior to this, the Sikhs also solemnized their weddings according to the *sanatan dharam* tradition of Hinduism*. It was performed by the Brahmins who in due course of time made it a source of their livelihood. The poor Sikhs were sick of the pundit's avaricious conduct. The satguru directed the Sikhs not to depend on the Brahmin or pundit anymore and get it done by the baptised Sikhs. The *Anand karaj* ceremonies were held for six marriages on this occasion at village Khote of district Ferozepur (now Moga). Anand Marriage Act was passed on 22 October 1909. Various Sikh

* Anand Marriage Act was put forward by Maharaja Ripudaman Singh in the Viceroy's Council on 30 October 1908. The Maharaja Patiala sent Sant Jawala Singh and Maharaja Nabha his Chief Justice Bachan Singh to Bhaini Sahib for gathering some testimony to this effect. Satguru Partap Singh wired to Maharaja Nabha while Sant Jawala Singh secured a letter from him. It was said in telegraphic message and the letter that "we have been following the Anand tradition for the last fifty years (it is not fifty but 70 years). The Singh Sabha had no other proof with it except this one. So this Act was passed on the evidene of Namdharis".

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societies adopted it with a little bit of methodical change here and there.

Actual Tradition

It included holding *havan* (oblation to fire god) after Asa di Var *keertan*, at some distance from the installation of Guru Granth Sahib opened for recitation of required verses. The five Sikhs would recite *gurbani* from the *pothis* (parts of the Holy Scripture), the sixth made offerings in the holy fire offering while the seventh would sprinkle a drop or two of water. It was followed by preparation of amrit and administration of the same to the wedlock couple. Then the couple was made to circumambulate around the havan fire.

Thereafter, the recitation of the path (full reading of Adi Sri Guru Granth Sahib) was concluded. Then the Anand Sahib Keertan was held and the *karah parsad* (the sanctified pudding) was distributed after saying the Sikh prayer.

In Khote, their new tradition was bound to have its worst impact on the Brahmins who were earlier the respected priests for the Sikhs also. They tried to raise a hue and cry against this innovation. The satguru listened to them with great patience and tried to persuade them saying,

"We don't believe in depriving anybody of his right, instead we ask everybody for adherence to his right. We hold the justice-loving and righteous Brahmins in high esteem but at the same time we deem it our duty to push aside the greedy one from our way in his own larger interest. By introducing Anand tradition we have simply enabled the Sikhs to discharge their responsibilities themselves. So you should rather be happy over this development. But even the repeated persuasion had little effect on the Brahmins who approached the Deputy Commissioner with the complaint that the new sect had deprived them of their livelihood.

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Report on 'Rebellious Speech'

In the wake of protests from the irate Brahmins, the *chowkidar* (watchman) of village Khote complained to the police station Bagha Purana that the satguru and his followers were instigating the public by making rebellious speeches against the government. He added that for the last two three days (Satguru) Ram Singh has been in his village along with his 400-500 followers. They talked sedition, said the country would soon be theirs, and they would speedily have 1,25,000 armed men to back them, that they would only take a fifth of the land's produce from the cultivators, and were all together comporting themselves in a very extraordinary manner.

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CHAPTER-9

BANS ON KUKA DEEWANS (MEETINGS)

Following the watchman's report, a sergeant was sent to the village Khote. He was followed by an Assistant Superintendent of police.* Verifying the report of the village watchman as correct, a ban was imposed on the deewans (religious gatherings) of Kukas in district Ferozepur by the Deputy Commissioner at the orders of Punjab government. The administration was ordered to dispatch Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji and his followers to Bhaini Sahib under police guard. The Deputy Commissioner Ferozepur, Mr. Thomas summoned the satguru to the police station Bagha Purana and asked,

> "We have received complaints against you regarding seditious speeches. What would you say on this?"

He replied in a very calm and composed manner,

> "I preach only truth and religion. I want to save people from the burden of timed out, futile and expensive old traditions. I am trying to remove their suffering caused with the decline in social, religious and ethical values. I have nothing against anybody. I am all for the welfare of my country and community. If this is what you call rebellion then I really am ready to pay for it at any cost."

* Kooka documents, p. 3.

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The Deputy Commissioner was taken aback at this candid stance of the satguru. After a brief pause of silence, the officer said,

"From now onwards you will not be allowed to have any gatherings in this district. After the proclamation of this order, the satguru was sent to Bhaini Sahib through different police stations. From there he kept producing himself before the Deputy Commissioner Ludhiana for 28 days together. He would go there daily on foot.

The Cooked-Up Reports

In April, May and June 1863 AD, reports were gathered on the orders of the Lt. Governor against the Satguru. Most of these were baseless and fanciful only. Here Captain Miller's report on the informer Genda Singh merits special mention. It was submitted on 11 June 1863AD. Miller writes that Genda Singh was sent to Bhaini Sahib for ascertaining the intentions of the satguru. He reached there when the Master was away from the *dera*. Genda Singh went to Baba Sahib Singh and receiving the secret chant from the Baba, he requested him for initiation into Kooka or namdhari faith. Thus he joined the namdhari mainstream. Genda Singh saw that after drum beat at night, 50 kukas got training in wielding lathis from Baba Sahib Singh for two hours. Then he expressed wish to have a glimpse of the Master. Baba Sahib Singh sent him for searching the satguru and handed him two letters for giving the same to the satguru. Genda Singh had his way after getting the letters and gave them to Miller in the Jalandhar cantonment.

This is the essence of Captain Miller's report which he had sent to the Lt. Governor through the Inspector General of Police*. The letters which form a part of Miller's report are being given here as under:

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* Kooka documents, p. 6.

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Letter No.1

Salutation "The Sakhi of Guru Govind Singh". I Guru Govind Singh, will be born in a carpenter's shop, and will be called Ram Singh. My house will be between the Jamna and Sutlej rivers. I will declare my religion. I will defeat the Faring his and put the crown on my own head, and blow the sankh. The musicians shall praise me in 1921 (1864). I, the carpenter, will sit on the throne. When I have got one lakh and twenty-five thousand Sikhs with me, I will cut off the heads of the Fringhis. I will never be conquered in battle, and will shout "Akal, Akal". The Christians will desert their wives and fly from the country when they hear the shout of 1½ lakhs of Khalsas. A great battle will take place on the banks of the Jamna, and blood will flow like the waters of the Ravi, and no Frunghi be left alive. Insurrections will take place in the country in 1922 (1865). The Khalsa will reign, and the Rajah and ryot will live in peace and comfort, and no one shall molest another."

"Day by day Ram Singh's rule will be enlarged. God has written this. It is so lie, my brethren. In 1865, the whole country will be ruled by Ram Singh. My followers will worship Wahaguru. God says this will happen."

Letter No. 2

"Salutation. Read the enclosed (i.e. the above) to all Sikhs. It is the request of Sikhs here. Send news of your where abouts. We wish to see you here. You have been absent a long time. Come in this direction quickly. We can't remain apart from you so long."

A perusal of letter -1 from beginning to end reveals that this is quite cooked up and fake. It attempts to say that Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji is talking about prophesy of Guru Gobind Singh to claim that he is a reincarnation of the tenth

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guru. It also tends to augur abiding by the commandment of the Akal Purkh, Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji will kill the Englishmen and restore the Khalsa rule by enthroning himself. The following points from this letter are worth taking notice of:

(1) Is there any historical evidence of any person named Genda Singh?

(2) Can Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji-the apostle of non-violence- be expected to emit such words of violence even through his pen?

(3) Was Baba Sahib Singh immature enough to hand over such a confidential letter to some unknown person and a letter which should have been given only to a highly trustworthy man?

(4) When this letter was written to the followers and as per the second letter, read out to them then what was the point in sending it back to the satguru?

(5) This letter was sent by Captain Miller to the Lt. Governor with his report dated 11 June 1863AD needs a deep contemplation as where the Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji and Baba Sahib Singh were on 5th. or 6th. of June i.e. five-six days earlier.

As regards the first letter the official report describes Genda Singh as a Kooka who is treated by Baba Sahib Singh as his confidant and handed the highly confidential letter. As per very rudimentary norms of rationale it should have been kept very guarded from a political viewpoint. In such an event Genda Singh cannot be the person who may be altogether unknown in the Kooka history. We have the oldest and authentic Kooka history hand-written by Bhai Santokh Singh. Had Genda Singh been such a well-known Kooka held worthy to take the satguru's personal mail then his name

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along with his contribution must have been on record in the early history of our community. Furthermore, this sacred letter written by the satguru's own hands too would not have remained outside the historical records. But the absence of both the details in the authentic Kooka history is by itself a strong testimony that both- Genda Singh and the letters under reference were just sham.

The doubt whether the satguru could be supposed to write such a letter goads us to read the following words from his *Rehatnama*:

> "Put up with the stingy speech of others. Forgive even if someone hits you. The guru is your saviour."

The satguru had delivered this preaching to his followers all over Punjab in the very beginning of 1863AD. Therefore, it must be thought as to how a votary of non-violence could write such words which could provoke the Sikhs to sever the heads of whites.

So far as Baba Sahib Singh is concerned, he was undeniably one among the favourites of the satguru and a well-known person of intellect coupled with alacrity. We shall know it further ahead that after the Kooka organization was established he was appointed in-charge of the postal department. As per official record, the satguru had made up his mind to install him as his successor after him. Besides, the government authorities took him as very deft and intelligent person. These things explain well the intellect level of Baba Sahib Singh. So it cannot be expected of such a vigilant man to hand over a personal letter of the satguru to a new and unknown man.

Moreover, there was no point in returning the first letter to the satguru. Yes, there could be some plausibility in case it bore a note that the letter should be returned after reading out to the *sangat*.

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Yest, the fog can be dispelled to some extent if it comes to light as to where the satguru was when Genda Singh came to Bhaini Sahib. As mentioned earlier, Capt. Miller submitted his report to the governor on 11 June which clarifies that Genda Singh must have visited Bhaini Sahib on 5th. or 6th. or 7th. of June 1863AD.

Going by official reports, Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji was in village Khote during these days. He reached there on 2nd. of June and executed Anand Karaj ceremonies on 3 June. On 6 June Assistant Superintendent Police Ferozepur went there while on 7th. Deputy Commissioner Ferozepur called him to the police station Bagha Purana. He got him in police custody and dispatched him to Bhaini Sahib through different police stations. As regards Baba Sahib Singh he should have been with the satguru like other heads of state (s) particularly at Khote where a historical tradition was to be established. As per this situation he was out of Bhaini Sahib from the very beginning of June. Therefore, the visit of fancied Genda Singh to Bhaini Sahib during these dates turns out to be just bogus. Supposing, Baba Sahib did not go to Khote and taking him as a confidant he was left behind for other arrangements still it is difficult to believe that Baba Sahib Singh was unaware of the satguru's whereabouts. Genda Singh story turns baseless by all means. This is proved also from the official report. The statement of Genda Singh regarding martial training to the followers at night has already been mentioned. But its refutation in the official records punctures the very bubble of Genda Singh's existence. The record says that Genda Singh's report on nocturnal martial training to the Kookas could not be ratified. (Page 28*).

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* Genda Singh's reports about the drilling of Kookas have not been corroborated. (Brief Account of the Kuka Sect, P.28)

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Chapter-10

Hazro Under Vigil

Since Hazro in district Attock was the first headquarters of Kookas, it was bound to attract the government's attention. As per the government's records, the Punjab Lt. Governor had called Mr. Green, the Assistant Superintendent Police of Attock and instructed him to keep strict vigil on Kookas' activities. Also, he was instructed to watch carefully if any communication is going on between (Satguru) Ram Singh (ji) and Kuka's leader of Hazro.*

Although there is nothing incriminating about Kookas on record but the way the Attock ASP was called by the Lt. Governor and instructed like this, bespeaks volumes about the phobia the British government nurtured about the Kookas.

The Apprehension of Rebellion

It was very much in the air that Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji will definitely reach on the occasion of 1863AD *deep mala* (illumination with lamps) along with thousands of his followers. The government of Punjab seemed to have got very much boggled from the report of Capt. Menzies the Deputy Superintendent Police, Amritsar. It is that said,

> "A Kooka constable of Amritsar police admitted before Inspector Narayan Singh that by the deep mala

* Kuka documents, p. 5.

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this time, all the preparations of Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji will be over and there will be rebellion in Amritsar. There are reportedly 40,000 volunteers ready to rise in revolt and as per the satguru they are able to get weapons (guns) also if needed. Their postal system has become duly operative all over Punjab. Their mail reaches from one village to the other very efficiently. They do not avail the services of the government's postal department."*

Major Farrington Report

Major Farrington, the Commissioner of the Amritsar Commissionerate has also expressed a possibility of rebellion on *deep mala* occasion i.e. 31 May 1863AD in his report which says:

"There seems to be a very general opinion abroad that a demonstration of some sort will take place at Amritsar on the part of Ram Singh and his disciples at or about the time of the Diwali this year."**

Report regarding a Circular issued by the Satguru

In his reports dated 7 and 22 June 1863AD, the D.S.P. Amritsar mentions about a circular issued by the satguru as following:***

(Circular)

"*Sri Wah Guru ji ka Khalsa; Sri Wah Guru Ji Ki Fateh*" to all Sikhs, to all villagers, to all women and children who visit the Diwan Darbar, pay attention to all I have taught you, or your faces will be blackened in both this worlds. Whoever

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* Kuka Papers, p. 9

** Ibid. p. 10.

*** Ibid.

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commits adultery, theft, etc., let him not come to the Darbar, and if he tries to force his way, pray to the Guru to stop him. Sing the Granth together, and the praise of the Deity; be afraid of none; abuse no one. Your Guru watches over his followers, and will and them. I send you the names of those who have offended me, that they may be refused admittance into your houses.

"Whoever makes money by the marriage of his daughter is a rascal (badmash). Whoever commits infanticide or exchanges his daughter is equally so. Your children should be educated in the precepts of the Granth. Come without fail at the Diwali."*

This circular seems to be a pruned edition of the Rehatnama (Code of Conduct) which the satguru had issued in the name of the followers from Sri Bhaini Sahib in the beginning of 1863AD. The actual Rehatnama has been given in the coming pages.

* Kuka Papers, p. 10

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CHAPTER-11

REHATNAMA
(Code of Conduct)

EK ONKAR SATGURU PARSAD

"Rise in the last watch* of the night and purity your mouth then bathe, read the scriptures, if they are not known, then acquire them by rote; every one, old women and maidens 'Jup' Jap', complete Raihras, Arti, Sohela this much, be particular to learn. All practise virtue and continence. Worship the True God during the whole eight watches. Look upon the daughter and sisters of others as your own. Other's rights, the Guru (Nanak) has already written: "Other's rights". Nanak says, "are pig to one and cow to the other", Should any one enquire the secret of worship and not practise it, then his face will be blackened in both worlds. Let not one speak ill or harshly, be meek: bear ill or harsh sayings from all; if any one strikes you, even then be meek your protector is God. Always hide your good deeds Assemble often. Sing the scriptures daily. Should you wish to give a feast* purify the place, procure new vessels, enter the cooking place with washed feet. At the same time perform five acts of worship, purify the place for worship. In the ceremony use pulas or plum wood; do not blow the fire whilst worshipping it (Dhoopkarna) use a fan. Five persons at the worship read

* Mela Lagwana, Akhand Path Karna and Langar karna (Complier).

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the scriptures, 'Choupae, Jup, Jap, Chandi Charitar, Akal Ustat"; a sixth person keep putting on the offering a seventh to continue sprinkling the fire gently with water. If any one commits adultery or theft; then admit him nowhere in the meetings. Should he be powerful then all pray that he may be disabled from coming. My knowledge is small, you can understand everything for yourselves. Let everyone put up their hands to God (Praying) Oh! Great ruler, may our faith continue. Wear Kachchas, put them on one leg before removing them from the other. Do not cover the evil deeds of others. Let no one receive money in lieu of a daughter or a sister, or barter them. Continually repeat God, God (Guru Guru). Do not eat flesh or drink spirits. Continue always in the fear of God.*

The purport behind sending this '*Rehatnama*' to the governor after making alterations here and there by Capt. Menjiz and Major Frington seems to be simply ratifying the reports that the satguru and his followers would rise in revolt on the occasion of Deepmala 1863AD at Amritsar.

* Gutka Namdhari Nitnem, pp. 40-44 (Ed. 1). See also Kuka Papers, pp. 27-28.

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Chapter-12

The First Orders of House Arrest

It has been already mentioned that the Satguru was sent back to Bhaini Sahib through various police stations after his 'deewan' in Khote. On the other hand, the Lt. Governor of Punjab had ordered to all the government officers all over the state to furnish reports on Kooka Movement. Mr. Young Husband inspector general of police, collected all those reports and wrote a memorandum to the governor. On the basis of those reports the *satguru* was placed under house arrest in Bhaini Sahib. The following is a brief account of the house arrest and bans imposed on him:

(1) Intelligence of Ram Singh's proceedings was given to His Honour the Lieutenant Governor early in April, 1863 from which time the strictest watch has been maintained, without in any way molesting Ram Singh, to ascertain the character of his preachings and proceedings.

(2) From the reports now submitted by many officers, it appears that Ram Singh is endeavouring to effect a reform in the Sikh religion and some of his doctrines and precepts are not only harmless, but also beneficial.

(3) His converts are numerous, but are confined chiefly to the lower classes. Some of them are to be found in the Police.

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(4) Ram Singh gives out that be does not sock an earthly kingdom, and his preaching, so for as has been ascertained, does not tend to sedition.

(5) But advantage is taken of his movement to circulate paper, whether true or false, in his name, which contain matter dangerous to the public welfare. Some of Ram Singh's followers have been reported as speaking seditious words, and there is undoubtedly an impression abroad that he is setting himself up as a future king, who is to drive the British out of the Punjab.

(6) Whatever be the intention, the result of his meetings and exhortations is to disturb the minds of the people and already one slight disturbance between the orthodox and new sect has been reported, and it is very generally believed that at the Diwali fair at Amritsar there will be a grand meeting of the new sect, and some disturbance may be apprehended.

(7) "An assembly which was not unlawful when it assembled may subsequently become an unlawful assembly"

Now, it appears from the foregoing, that the assemblies of Ram Singh are liable to come under the category of unlawful, and thus to constitute the offence specified in Section 141, Penal Code - Vide Explanation.

(8) There is sufficient ground to believe that an assembly such as it is contemplated at Amritsar, during the Diwali, will certainly prove an unlawful one by its acts.

(9) Although, therefore, it is not the wish of Government to interfere in any mere question of religion, or to

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put a stop to assemblies brought together solely to effect reforms in a particular faith, still, if the measures proposed, or the conduct of the religionists, tend to provide a breach of the peace, such assemblies must be considered unlawful, and the leaders render themselves liable to punishment by law.

(10) In the present instance, Ram Singh and his followers are to be warned of the consequences apprehended, and are to be bound not to call any assembly at Amritsar. They are to have it so explained to them that their meetings, however, harmless in themselves, lead to the belief that some harm is intended to the common peace and safety, and that reports true or false-are circulated and believed, which tend to unsettle men's minds.

(11) After this warning, should the assemblies be continued, and any disturbance follow, Ram Singh, and his disciples will be held responsible, and be tried under the sections referring to offences against the public tranquility.

(12) Ram Singh is to be directed to remain in his village and the police will keep themselves informed and report direct on his proceedings.

Sd/-
T.D. Forsyth, 30th June 1863*.
Officiating Secretary, Punjab Government.

The Vigil Begins

On 3 July 1863AD Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji was summoned to Ludhiana and explained him the above

* Papers relating to the kooka sect 11-12.

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directives of the Govt. Deputy Commissioner Ludhiana told him that, he could not leave the boundaries of Bhaini Sahib without the government's permission. Hearing this, the satguru smiled a little and then returned to Bhaini Sahib.

Circular

After the proclamation of the house arrest order, Major Young Husband, the Inspector General of Police issued a circular to all the Deputy Commissioners of Punjab asking them to direct their respective Police Superintendents to send any report they received about Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji straightway to the Secretary to Punjab Government. They were also directed to tell them that the information be sought from different sources in a surreptitious manner without leaving any chance of leakage*.

Kooka Organisation Starts

From 3rd July, a police constable and Havaldar were deployed at Bhaini Sahib for keeping an eye on the activities of Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji. Intelligence police was also pressed into service.

The Appointment of Subas (Governors)

Having freed from his tours the Satguru formulated a scheme for organizing his Sikhs at national level. Going by the scheme he appointed five (Subas) governors as a first step in this direction. They were ordered to organize the Sikhs all over Punjab. But the government placed these five also under house arrest at Bhaini Sahib. Thereafter he appointed 17 more (Subas) governors who were also house-arrested-some of them at Bhaini Sahib while others in their respective villages.

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* Kooka Papers, p. 1.

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The Names and Villages of 22 Subas

1. Baba Jawahar Singh, Village Sohal district, Amritsar
2. Baba Kahan Singh Nihang, Village Chakk Kalan Riyasat Malerkotla
3. Baba Sudh Singh, Village Madhaur, District Ambala
4. Baba Sahib Singh, Village Bangalipur, District Amritsar
5. Baba Lakha Singh, Village Malaud, District Ludhiana
   (These were the first five subas.)
6. Baba Roor Singh s/o Dyal Singh, Village Bangalipur, District Amritsar (Ramgarhia)
   (He was Baba Sahib Singh's brother)
7. Baba Sarmukh Singh, Village Lalluwala, Riyasat Patiala
   (A Jatt Zamindar, born in village Dhillwan, Riyasat Nabha)
8. Baba Jameet Singh s/o Chanda Singh, Village Gill, District Sialkot (a zamindar)
9. Baba Giani Singh, Village Mandi Kalan Riyasat Sangrur (Rajput)
10. Baba Maan Singh s/o Makhan Singh, Village Saido, District Ferozepur (Jatt-Zamindar)
11. Baba Brahma Singh s/o Gulab Singh, V.P.O. Daryapur, District Karnal (Jatt-Zamindar)
12. Baba Bhagwan Singh Ahluwalia, Village Fattewal, District Amritsar
13. Baba Raja Singh, Village Trandi, District Sialkot (Ramgarhia)
14. Baba Hukma Singh s/o Mehar Singh, Village Pitthon, Riyasat Nabha (a zamindar)
15. Baba Malook Singh s/o Sukha Singh, Village Phullewal, Ferozepur (a zamindar)
16. Baba Jota Singh (potter) s/o Ratan Singh, V.P.O. Dhaipai, District. Sialkot
17. Baba Khazan Singh (carpenter) s/o Mani Singh, V.P.O. Ladhana District Jalandhar (Ramgharia).

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18. Baba Narain Singh Ramgarhia s/o Santa Singh, V.P.O. Khatre District Ludhiana
19. Baba Samund Singh s/oWasawa Singh, Village Khote, District Ferozepur (a zamindar)
20. Baba Pahara Singh Raees (zamindar), Village Malaud, District Ludhiana
21. Baba Khushal Singh (zamindar) s/o Karam Singh, V.P.O. Tharaaj, District Hisar

    (He was father of Mata Jeewan Kaur and Mata Fateh Kaur)
22. Baba Gopal Singh (zamindar) s/o Sahib Singh, V.P.O. Rakhar Maror Riyasat Patiala*

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* On Kooka Movement, the historian Prof. Ruchi Ram Sahni writes that Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji appointed a suba in every district. Two jathedars were appointed at tehsil level and a 'granthi' for every village. 'Kaumi Ashrams' were set up for primary education and langar (free kitchen) was opened wherever he went. He urged his Sikhs to live a simple life and help out their 'ashrams'. He observed that western civilization is impacting the simplicity and ethical values of life in a big way. So he condemned the western education and forbade his followers to join government service and courts. His publicity drive alerted the system. The priest class was badly irritated at their denunciation of tradition. They closed the doors of gurdwaras for him and his followers. The government took resort to law for curbing his activities. (Gurdwara Reform Movement, P.34)

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CHAPTER-13

KUKA POSTAL SERVICE

Postal Department

Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji set up his own private postal department and appointed Suba Sahib Singh as its head. He had realized it very insightfully since long that for saving their mail from censorship it was imperative to establish a postal department of their own. This department was established in such a way that nobody could have access to any of the letters and the delivery too was comparatively speedier and more economical. Code words were fixed for the news and these were not known even to the messengers. Only the subas and jathedars were familiar with them. A messenger was simply supposed to convey the code word to the other end without raising any question and the receiver would receive it and rush to convey it further to the next destination. Thus, the message would reach to the final destination through different phases. The official documents too, have a word of praise for the Kooka Postal Service as:

> "The Kookas, or as they are sometimes called the 'Sant Khalsa (Khalsa Saints)' have a private post of their own, which appears to be admirably organised, Confidential order are circulated much in the Scottish bygone days. A Kuka, on the arrival at his village or another of the same sect with a despatch at once leaves off whatever work he may be engaged upon; if in the midst of the repast, not another morsel is

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eaten; he asks no questions, but taking the missive, starts off at a run and conveys it to the next relief or to its destinations. Important communications are sent verbally, and are not committed to writing. In carrying messages, they are said by Major Perkins to make great detours, to avoid the Grand Trunk road.*

Ram Singh in Every Home

After the house-arrest of 22 subas, the Commissioner Ambala reached Bhaini Sahib and said to the satguru,

"You are undergoing house-arrest these days. Then you appointed five subas. We placed them also under home arrest. It was followed by the appointment of 17 more subas who have also been house-arrested by us. What will you do now?"

"I will produce Ram Singh in every home," replied the satguru in his characteristic style of gay abandon.

Langar at Bhaini Sahib

During the period of house-arrest there used to be a good stream of visitors who came to have a glimpse of the Master. For his personal livelihood the satguru had opened a cloth and iron shop where day-to-day iron implements of daily use were also sold. The profit from this business was used to fend for the family and whatever surplus was there it was spent in the service of the devotees. To spend in the best way what was received by way of donation from the followers, langar (community kitchen) was started at Bhaini Sahib. Started in 1863AD, this langar continues uninterrupted till date.

Sada-Varat

Apart from *langar* a round-the clock boarding popularly known as sada-varat was also started. Inside the main gate of the gurdwara into the *deodhi* i.e. ante-chamber there is a big wicker basket full of chapattis and a cauldron of *daal*. The regular *langar* closes down at night but this one keeps going thereafter

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* A Brief Account to the Kooka sect, pp. 29-30.

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as well. The Sikh guard on night duty is supposed to serve food to any visitor who comes at odd hours without asking his identity or where he has come from or where is going to. This tradition too has been in practice ever since its inception in 1863AD.

Cheeni Wala Satguru

In namdhari sect, Sarguru Ram Singh is known as Cheeni Wala Satguru also. This nom de plume owes its origin to a Chinese mare presented to him by Sardar Mangal Singh Bishanpuria, a close relative of Maharaja Patiala. He had gifted it to the satguru after getting initiated. Since the satguru normally rode this mare he came to be called Chini wala patshah.

Rumour of Maharaja Patiala becoming a Kooka

As per official records, "A majority of (Satguru) Ram Singh's following lay in the deprived segment of society but some feudal lords also joined this sect. This office has received reports from several quarters that Maharaja Patiala has also joined the Kooka sect. Whether this is right or wrong but there is no doubt that Sardar Mangal Singh of Bishanpura is one of his nobles and he has some political agenda behind this move. Mangal Singh is a relative to the rulers of Dhaulpur and Bharatpur riyasats. He is famous as Jarnail in his fraternity. Lakha Singh- another man from Behrampur and a landlord of Patiala is also one of his reputed Sikhs*.

The Bans Lifted

The government realized that the imposition of bans on the satguru and his district chiefs have simply increased the apprehensions. Therefore, the bans were lifted at the orders of Punjab Lieutenant Governor Sir Donald Mcleod and they were allowed to move about freely**.

* A brief Account of Kooka Sect, p. 33.

* The satguru had reached the Hola festival of 1867 without the prior permission of the government. It was his first Satyagreh. Rather than taking any action against him for this violation the government lifted the bans. (Kooka Papers, P.49)

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Panthak Progress

Immediately as the ban was removed, the task of propagation of the cause started with redoubled zeal. The deewans again became the major highlights of Kooka activities. Not in hundreds but in thousands the people took amrit and got initiated into the Sant Khalsa Panth. The report which the then Inspector General of Police submitted to secretary, Punjab Government on this development says:

1. Although I feel that as yet there is no need to impose ban on the activities of (Satguru) Ram Singh but still I understand a vigilant eye must be kept on the activities of his subas. This panth has the potential to trigger a great trouble. That is why we should remain cautious for some more time.

2. Although the aspirations and objectives of the Kooka leader seem peaceful apparently but the unflinching faith of his followers in him can be an easy instrument of causing loss to us.

3. For the time being it is not possible to calculate the strength of Kooka following but for the sake of your convenience, a gist of the reports received on this sect during the current years is being submitted herewith:

> "All the reports indicate that the Kooka following is on the increase. Capt. Herris has informed that before 1866AD the number of Kookas was quite small but the tenets of the new sect have won the faith of people in *parganas* of Ambala and Ladhova. It has come to light now that about 15 entire villages have become devout followers of Kooka mission now. The population of these villages is estimated to be about 4000. Most of them belong to lower castes like Ramdasias, Ramgarhias, Ironsmiths and jatts. It seems that Sudh Singh and Kahan Singh - the two subas have been appointed for Ambala. But at the

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time when Capt. Herris reported there was no suba appointed for district Ambala. The deewans held in the districts were small but the zeal of the devotees remained alive due to some homeless zealots. Seven Kookas were in the police force. When the well-meaning or reputed people of this district were asked about their impression about this panth, everybody described it as purely religious."*

The Opinion of Army Officers

The writer of "A Brief Account of Kooka Act" writes that 'we have gathered the opinion of Indian officers of border platoons which is as follows: "They seem to be very much committed to the principles of this mission. They take it as an attempt at restoring the pristine glory of Sikhism and eliminating its innate evils through establishment of this new sect e.g. consulting the Brahmins for fixation of dates for the occasions like wedding. From what they say it can be deduced that this panth believes in the non-duality of existence and monotheism.

The panth preached righteousness and condemned falsehood very sternly. The Master aspired to see Sikhism in its earlier glory through its rejuvenation by doing away with all that eroded it. The ones with whom they discussed whether the movement had some political agenda also, just laughed and said that it was purely religious.

There is no doubt that Kookas and all others (Sikhs) will be happy to see the Khalsa Raj in a renewed shape. But I don't find any threat in the progress of this panth."**

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* A Brief Account of Kooka Sect, p. 44.

** Ibid., pp. 46-47.

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CHAPTER-14

ANANDPUR HOLA (SATYGRAH)

There was a ban imposed by the government on Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji's participation in massive religious congregations. But he had gone to attend the Hola Mohalla of 1866 AD without permission and now he decided to attend the Hola Mohalla of Anandpur in 1867AD. Thinking of just showing fidelity to law he sought permission this time but it was denied. Now the satguru announced that he would definitely go to attend the auspicious occasion. In a way, it was a declaration regarding preparation of second satyagraha. Vis-à-vis his resolve, the government also relaxed and no obstacle was placed in his way. But at the same time General Mc Andrews, the Deputy Inspector General police McAndrews was deputed to keep an eye on his activities. On 10 March 1867AD he left Lahore and reached Anandpur early morning on 17th. He was accompanied with an ASP and 50 constables from Hoshiarpur police plus 1 inspector and 10 constables from Jalandhar. Sardar Bahadur Atar Singh, the former Command Officer of Sher Dil Regiment, Ferozepur Police inspector Qutab Shah and inspector Fateh Khan from Amritsar were also a part of this retinue. On 18 March, Major Perkins, the Deputy Commissioner also reached there. There was a grave turbulence in Punjab Police in the wake of simply an announcement made by the satguru. It seemed as if once again after Guru Gobind Singh's times, Punjab was put under siege by the royal forces.

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Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji reaches Anandpur

The satguru entered in the boundaries of Anandpur along with his Sikhs on 19 March 1867AD. On the way there was the camp of government officers. The victory slogans raised by the Sikhs echoed in the skies. Hearing this, the officers came out. The satguru raised his right arm and as per tradition the procession of thousands of Sikhs halted at once. McAndrews Sahib saluted the Master by removing his hat in European tradition and took him to the camp along with Suba Jawahar Singh ji to his tent. Then there ensued the following dialogue between McAndrews and Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji Ji.

Mc: What's the purpose of your visit to Anandpur ?

Satguru Ji: Just to pay obeisance to the birth place of the Khalsa and have a *darshan* of the holy shrine.

Mc: The mahants and priests of Anandpur Sahib have also lodged a complaint against you that you will be coming here with a view to capture Anandgarh.

Satguru Ji; (Showing rosary): We have this only with us.

Mc: If needed by the government, will you extend Kooka support to it ?

Satguru Ji: I have only a religious relation with them.

Mc: When do you wish to have a darshan of the gurdwara?

Satguru Ji: Tomorrow morning.

Mc writes in his report, "When we asked him about the objections raised by the Sikhs on reading the gurbani shabads with uncovered heads, he said that he cannot be responsible for his Sikhs as they are in a different state of mind while doing so. However, he agreed on the point that the shabads would not be read. Meeting with him was fixed for the next day.

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Mc's Wife Sees Jesus Christ in Satguru

Mess wife was very much impressed by the haloed personality and utterances of Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji.

"I see Lord Christ in his personality," she said.

Mahant Hari Singh and Mc

Mac bade a very respectful farewell to the satguru. Later, the priests of Anandpur Sahib were called. Mahant Hari Singh-their leader was the mahant of Gurdwara Kesgarh. Mc asked him about his opinion on kookas.

Mahant: They are 'tankhahias'. Their turban is easily removed while reading the gurbani 'shabad'. They have come here just for locking horns with mainstream Sikhs.

Mc: But they cannot be denied darshan of the gurdwara. You need not worry. The government will make all arrangements.

Mahant: Swords will be 'drawn' if these Kookas enter the gurdwara.

Mc: Whosoever brandishes the sword will be liable to 14 years of imprisonment.

Mc's Report

In his report on the fair, Col. Mc writes,

"That very day in the evening I went to Ram Singh's dera and met him. I didn't take anybody along except Sant Atar Singh. Ram Singh sat surrounded by his Sikhs under a *shamiana*. There must be about 5000 of them. A pin-drop silence prevailed in the atmosphere. A large number of men and women present there were finely dressed. I didn't find anyone of them excited or provoked. At the very sight of me he came forward immediately and greeted me which was something unprecedented.

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Salute under Scanner

Rising from his seat the satguru greeted Mc.

This seems to be nothing more than an exaggeration. Mac's statement implies that he had reached the satguru in the evening. His 'asana' being surrounded by about five thousand devotees amidst complete peace seems to be a scene of some 'satyuga' gathering. When even a common Sikh is not supposed to rise from the 'deewan' to greet someone, the act of the satguru's doing so is not at all convincing. And, then Mac's saying that it was unprecedented in respect of spiritual Masters, hints at the voice of his conscience that his statement regarding the satguru's rushing forward to greet him will have no takers. This bragging is refuted by the fact that from kuka record of 400-500 pages not even a single reference is available to corroborate that the satguru ever saluted any government officer. Mac himself had gone in the satguru's service. A perusal of the government's reports reveals that as and when the satguru had to approach the officers due to some reason, he never saluted anybody. For instance, Macnabb's report on the satguru must be referred to in this regard,

> "Ram Singh has no pretention to be the Saintly 'fakir'. He visits you attend by half a dozen horsemen; he is followed by scores of men on foot; he comes into your room surrounded by a court like a prince."*

Thus, J.W. Macnabb's report also ratifies that rising of the satguru -who maintained a majestic posture-from his seat just to salute a police officer is nothing but overstatement.

Going for Darshan of Gurdwaras

Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji set out for a tour to gurdwaras

* The report of J.W. Macnabb, Late Commissioner, Ambala Division dated 4 November 1871AD.

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on 20 March 1867AD. The English officers led him with policemen also moving along. When he made offering after paying obeisance at Gurdwara Kesgarh, the mahant Hari Singh said he did not know how to say prayer. At the command of the satguru, ardas was performed by Baba Brahma Singh. Distributing the parsad with his own hands he paid obeisance at Gurdwara Guru Tegh Bahadur. Here the mahant accepted the offering and said ardas joyfully. Then he went to the dera.

Satguru's Letter

Next day, he wrote to the priests of Anandpur Sahib and asked about the inability of Mahant Hari Singh to perform ardas. They came out only with an oral reply as follows:

1. That he sets himrself up as a God.
2. That when making a convert, he does not give him Amrut*, as is the custom, but whispers a "Muntur"** in his ear.
3. That when he makes a convert he says to him, "Junum Gooroo Hujroo, ur bashee Gooroo Bhainee,*** whereas the sikhs say "Junum Gooroo Patna, ur bashee Gooroo Nundpore."****
4. That whereas the Sikhs entering a place or worship do not untie their hair, or remove their turbans, Kookas do.
5. The Kookas in exciting themselves to such a degree as to be at times insensible, act like Mahomedan Faqueers and cannot be Gooroo Sikhs.

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* 'Amrut' is the holy water given to all Sikh Converts. It is simply 'Sherbut' of sugar and water.

** 'Munter' means a charm, incarnation, secret consulation, private active.

*** Translated this would be, "God was born at Hujroo but lives at Bhainee."

**** This means "God was born at Patna but lives at Nandpore."

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The Kookas don't Treat You as Sikhs, Satguru Tells the Priests.

The satguru wrote another letter to the priests as under:

"If they really acted upto the Sikh religion, they would appreciate his doctrine. That they act quite contrary to the "Grunth"*, by eating meat, driking, lying, licentiousness, female infanticide etc. and that, therefore, Kookas do not consider them Sikhs. Ram Singh concluded with the remark that Kookas in thinking of God become so excited, that they do now think of their hair and turbans as Sikhs do.

The Anandpur Sodhis Join Kooka Panth

Inspector Fazal Hussain writes in his report:

**"Of the Soodhees, Pertab Singh Russowleewala, with his son Dewa Singh, have both been converted to Kookaism. And Sodhee Narinder Singh Kiralee Wala, with Sodhee Heera Singh are both about to become Kookas." From everything I see, I am of opinion that the Kooka sect is daily increasing, while the Sikhs are on the decline which is chiefly attributable to the fact that Kooka converts are put to no expense whereas converts to Sikhism are 1f the fifty men who have been converted to Kookaism during the fair had turned Sikhs, the Nahungs would have been benefited at least (50) Rupees: whereas the Kooka converts have been gainers and the Nahungs losers, by their conversion to Kookaism instead of Sikhism. Thus the real cause of animosity of the Nahungs is accounted for.

Dissemination of Righteousness at Personal Expense

"Ram Singh preaches righteousness by spending from

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* The 'Grunth', a book of the Sikh religion composed by Nanak.

** Report Inspector Fazal Hussain, Special Reporter Hola Hoshiarpur, Dated 20 March 1867AD. Kuka Documents, p. 59.

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his own pocket. As a result people from the Sikh mainstream are joining his sect in large numbers".

Ram Singh- a Prophet

"Ram Singh bathes himself thrice daily, and at about 20'clock every morning takes to reading the "Grunth" which is understands perfectly. He abhors everything wicked. The Kookas therefore think very much of him, and honor him accordingly."

They believe him to be a prophet sent by God to estabablish the Kooka sect, which is to rise on the extinction of the Sikh religion, which they firmly believe is already on docline. They believe that Ram Singh thinks badly of all Hindoos, as he pray to but one God, while the Hindoo pray to several.

Satguru's Procession

"Ram Singh had 40 horses for himself and his subas. The trumpets were blown in his procession. He had 8000 kukas with him.

Father Guru Ram Singh and Village Bhaini Sahib

While describing the subas Fazal Hussain writes"

"I made several unsuccessful attempts to obtain from those men some information as to their family residence. All I could elicit from them was that since their conversationn to Kookaism they had forgotten their residence, and only know of Bhainee as such, and Ram Singh as their Gooroo."*

* Kuka Documents, p. 62.

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CHAPTER-15

DEEP MALA SRI AMRITSAR

The Deep Mala (illumination with the rows of earthen lamps) was held on 26 October 1867AD. There used to be a big fair on the day of *Deewali* every year in Amritsar, devotees from all parts and communities of Punjab flocked to the holy city. Some time before the fair several big and small deewans were held under the presidency of Baba Brahma Singh and Baba Jota Singh. But before the beginning of deep mala, the Deputy Commissioner Amritsar issued orders that no big deewan of Kookas will be allowed without his prior permission.*

The order aimed at preventing the Kookas to hold 'deewan' expected to be organized by them during Deewali days. The government apprehended that satguru Ram Singh would not leave this bright chance of propagating his mission by reaching Amritsar personally.

The aim of the mission -government knew- was to oust the British from India.

Meanwhile, in Bhaini Sahib, the satguru also resolved to reach Amritsar for preaching his mission. He tried to seek permission from the authorities concerned in this regard but

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* "In Amritsar numerous small meetings held under the superintendence of Baba Brahma Singh and Baba Jota Singh. Here also the Deputy Commissioner forbade gathering of the sect unless special permission was sought and granted. (Kooka Paperz, P.62)

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to not avail at all. To take care for this he declared his participation in the 'deewan' at Amritsar and pay obeisance at Durbar Sahib. So true to his declaration he reached Amritsar on 25 October 1867AD along with a large number of his Sikhs and Subas. The government, however, did not interfere in any of his programs this time like Anandpur. The satguru camped at Gharialian Talab on Taran Taaran Road outside Chatiwind Gate. As per the famous historian Giani Gian Singh 20,000 Kookas joined him in deep mala this time. Although, apparently the government avoided making any interference in his activities yet it was bewildered at the vigour he exhibited while carrying out his activities. Besides, the priests of Amritsar were also vainly unnerved at the apprehension that the Kookas would capture Akal Takht and Sri Harimandar. Therefore, there spread a wave of panic in the government-sponsored priesthood. The government deployed the Lahore police inspector Narain Singh to keep an eye on the Kooka camp. The satguru was informed by the government that he should be ready to pay obeisance at Durbar Sahib at 7 AM on 27th. of October but it should be ensured that not more than 50 Sikhs should accompany him to the sanctum sanctorum.

Sri Akal Bunga is a historical gurdwara built by the sixth Guru Hargobind ji. It is situated just opposite to Harimandar towards west. At that time all the major gurdwaras were under the control of priests and mahants upholstered by the government. They were the puppets in the hands of the ruling elite.*

Their basic duty of the Mahants was to dance at the tune of the government. It will not be an exaggeration to say

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* Essays in the Sikhism by Prof. Teja Singh, Principal Khalsa College Bombay p. 125 'ever since the control of the Central Gurdwaraz Head gone into the hands of the Government.

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that these shrines were in fact the agencies of government from where it could get verdicts of its own choice from the priests.

The government considered the Kooka activities as aimed at establishing a parallel and autonomous government in Punjab. Every Kooka was a rebel in its eyes and the satguru was the unique rebel leader of lakhs of rebels. It has been made already clear that the kukas had come with the satguru to Amritsar in defiance of the government's orders. Those who are familiar with the British politics well understand that the government is habitual to abet the forces antagonistic to leaders of some movement so that they should act against them in the larger interest of their own selves. It can also be easily understood that it is not very difficult for the people whose interests suffer due to such movements to take cudgels against their own people at the behest of the powers that be. No special efforts are needed to purchase and incite the self-oriented people.

On 27 October 1867AD i.e. the day next to 'Deep mala', the satguru set out for Durbar Sahib as per his program. Although the government had ordered that more than fifty Sikhs would not be allowed to accompany the satguru but this order was thrown to the winds vis-à-vis the passion and impulse of the Kooka Sikhs and other people. While entering the Durbar Sahib 'Parikarma' thousands of Sikhs were marching ahead amidst chanting of hymns at the beat of 'dholkis' and cymbals. Men and women of the city expressed their reverence for the satguru by showering flowers on him. The satguru made offering before Akal Bunga but due to the altercation with the priests, the satguru positioned himself between the Akal Bunga and 'Darshani Deodhi' and distributed 'karah parsad' to the devotees. He had taken it prepared in the dera itself. Thereafter, he went to Sri

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Harimandir Sahib. The official report says that the mahants of Darbar Sahib (Harimandir Sahib) presented him a turban and shawl. He accepted it gracefully. Thereafter, he went to gurdwara Jhanda Bunga where also he was presented a *dupatta* and a turban*.

Kooka record says, "He went again to Durbar Sahib on 28 October and for some time had rest in the 'bunga' of Rajasansi nobles. The Rajasansi nobles viz. Sardar Shamsher Singh and his brother Sardar Thakur Singh made offerings to him after having the privilege of having his darshan.

Thereafter the Hindu, Muslim and Sikh millionaires had the privilege of having a glance of him. Mr. Clarke, Mr. Struss and Mr. Christie, the A.S.P. also requested for a glimpse of him. The people kept getting initiated into Kooka fold during all the days of satguru's stay on the occasion of 'deep mala' festivities. Some people are of the view that 2000 new Kookas were initiated during this period. The kings of Dhauladhar and Maharaja Patiala's relative Sardar Mangal Singh Bishanpuria and the following subas were also with him:

(1) The satguru himself.

(2) Baba Jassa Singh (The satguru's father)

(3) Baba Sudh Singh- Suba, district Ambala

(4) Baba Sahib Singh "........The main suba

(5) Baba Naina Singh "........Warianh, district Amritsar

(6) Baba Malook Singh "......Phullewal, (Ferozepur)

(7) Baba Smund Singh "......Kuraiwala (Ferozepur)

(8) Baba Kahan Singh Nihang, Chakk Kalan, Riyasat Malerkotla

(9) Baba Khazan Singh Ladhana, district Jalandhar

(10) Baba Lakha Singh-Suba Malaud, district Ludhiana

(11) Baba Jameet Singh Suba Gill (Sialkot)

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* Kuka Papers, p. 64.

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(12) Baba Jota Singh Suba Dhaipai (Sialkot)
(13) Baba Brahma Singh Suba Daryapur (Karnal)
(14) Baba Ram Das Behman Jagraon
(15) Baba Lal Singh Gummati Riyasat Nabha
(16) Baba Wasava Singh Gul Cheta
(17) Baba Jawahar Singh Takhtupura (Ferozepur)
(18) Baba Harnam Singh Thind (Sirsa)
(19) Baba Pahara Singh Malaud (Ludhiana)

Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji was accompanied with his wife Mata Jassan and daughter on the occasion of Amritsar Deewali fair. The affluent people of Amritsar offered him gifts worth 700 rupees in addition to 12 rolls of precious cloth. He distributed blankets worth 750 rupees to the needy.

Mai Hukmi

A young girl Mai Hukmi aged 20 has been appointed as suba to propagate the faith among the women of Amritsar. She was the daughter of Ratan Singh, a landlord of village Warianh in district Amritsar. She has been entrusted the task of motivating Sikh women to join the Kuka Panth."*

Col. Mac Andrews writes in one of his memoranda,

"I asked Honorary Magistrate Sardar Mangal Singh Ramgarhia, Manager Durbar Sahib and some other Sikhs what they thought about (Satguru) Ram Singh. They were unanimous on the point that he is a man of noble and peaceful temperament who acts upon what he has read in life."**

Verdict against the Kookas

As at present there are only two parties in modern India-Congress and the government, similarly at that time there

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* Kuka Papers, pp. 64-66.

** Kuka Papers, p. 66.

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were only two classes- Kookas and the government. At present there is only one party viz. Indian National Congress that is representative of India. It has complete freedom of India as the sole political goal. At that time it was only the Kooka society which aimed at establishing the *Khalsa Raj* in Punjab. As at present some communal classes are strengthening the feet of the English regime by issuing verdicts against Congress, similarly some sections of feudal lords, priest class and mahants were out to issue verdicts against the Kookas and please the government. The Akal Takht clergy issued a verdict against the Kookas that they are excommunicated from the Sikh takhts (seats of temporal authority) due to their parting ways with the Sikh mainstream. It suited well the British government as the Sikhs for whose emancipation the Kookas had geared themselves up against the British were trying to malign their image.*"

After Amritsar, the satguru toured to all historical gurdwaras of Punjab. Prof. Ruchi Ram Sahni writes in his book "Gurdwara Reform Movement" :

> "This dedicated movement was an attempt to revive the spirit of the ingrained vigour among the Sikhs and curb the spread of ethical infirmities. It was a strong venture against the dissoluteness and misdeeds of the priesthood.**"

These words seemingly plagiarised from Prof. Ruchi

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* (a) The verdict against the patriotic Sikhs of 1914 was manoeuvred through their own clerics that they are not Sikhs.

(b) It was managed to honour with siropa and bracelet from Durbar Sahib pujari's General Dyre under whose command thousands of innocents were shot dead with machine guns in 1919 at Jallianwala Bagh. As a result, this massacre was justified by his supporters in the parliament.

** p.34

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Ram Sahni's book "Gurdwara Reform Movement" have been written in his book "Essays in Sikhism"* by Prof. Teja Singh M.A. Khalsa College Amritsar (who is Principal of Khalsa College Bombay these days)

Kabul Mission

The fame of Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji's patriotic activities had reached out so far and wide that two sons of a famous noble of Kabul reached Bhaini Sahib in the service of the Master. Punjab government which remained unrest at the hands of Kookas could not ascertain the purport behind the Kabul Mission. This is corroborated by a writing of Capt. Bailey available in official record. The Captain says that he had received credible information that a Native gentleman of some note in Kabul, by name Abdul Razak, had sent his two sons on a mission to Bhainee, it is supposed, to learn Ram Singh's doctrine. It was not found possible to elicit any particulars regarding the journey, though it would have been interesting to know how the fame of the village carpenter had reached so far."**

* Ibid., p. 121

** Kooka Records, p. 68.

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Chapter-16

Tharajwala Rebellion

During the last week of February 1869AD, 44 Kookas of district Ferozepur and Hissar led by Baba Mastan Singh Tharajwala were on their way to Bhaini Sahib. When they reached Kuraiwala in district Ferozepur, a Deputy Inspector of police Deewan Bakhsh was sent to contact them for enquiring about their objective behind going there. During conversation the police officer said something infra-dig against Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji. Unable to put up with this sacrilege some of the Kookas pulled him down his mare and snatched his sword. He ran for life and took shelter in a nearby house. From there he escaped in women's outfit as and when he found a chance for the same. He reported to his officers in Ferozepur that "a group of Kookas has refused to recognize the authority of the British adding thereby that they have declared Khalsa Raj in Punjab".*

On the basis of this report Mr. Turner Smith, the District Superintendent of Ferozepur set out for Kuraiwala at night with 20 pedestrian and 15 horse rider police men. This party reached Muktsar at 2 AM on 1 March 1869AD. Here the tehsildar Alam Shah informed Turner Smith that the Kookas are gathering in Tharajwala and they have refused to surrender. At last this force reached Tharajwala at 2 PM. With the cooperation of Sodhi Maan Singh and some other

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* Kooka record, p. 84.

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villagers they arrested all the 44 Sikhs and brought them to Ferozepur where they were prosecuted in the court of Mr. Knox, the Deputy Commissioner. The punishment meted out to these rebels is quite surprising. The group leader Mastan Singh was sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment plus a fine of fifty rupees. Sarmukh Singh and Harnam Singh were sentenced to one year of imprisonment and 25 rupees each as fine. Similarly Sarmukh Singh Phullewala had three months' imprisonment and fine of 10 rupees, Bachittar Singh Kuraiwala got 6-month jail term and Beli Singh Tharajwala was fined only 10 rupees. The following 37 Sikhs were acquitted*:

1.Anokh Singh (Jandwala) 2. Anoop Singh (Roopewala) 3. Bahadar Singh (Tharajwala) 4. Bela Singh (Tharajwala) 5. Bhoop Singh 6. Bhagwan Singh (Jandwala) 7. Bugh Singh (Jandwala) 8. Bhagwan Singh (Soaahg) 9. Chanda Singh (Sotha) 10. Dhyan Singh (Labarwala) 11. Dyal Singh (Soondewala) 12. Hira Singh (Phullewal) 13. Harnam Singh (Doohewal) 14. Jai Singh (Sotha) 15. Jaimal Singh (Khoonana) 16. Jameet Singh (Soondwala) 17. Jeeta Singh (Doohewal) 18. Kahan Singh (Joga) 19. Khazan Singh (Sotha) 20. Kharak Singh (Sotha) 21. Lal Singh (Sotha) 22. Maha Singh (Labarwala) 23. Mann Singh (Sotha) 24. Malook Singh (Phullewal) 25. Narain Singh (Kuraiwala) 26. Nand Singh (Phullewala) 27. Natha Singh (Mahabadhar) 28. Sher Singh (Bholewala) 29. Sahib Singh (Kuraiwala) 30. Sobha Singh (Sotha) 31. Suhel Singh Aulakh (Sirsa) 32. Sudh Singh (Joga Ralla) 33. Tara Singh (Fakkarsar) 34. Amar Singh

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* These Sikhs had abandoned their houses after selling all their belongings. So they had with them a sufficient amount of cash and valuables. Everything was seized by the police. As per the police report 5000 rupees in cash plus a large amount of gold and silver was captured from them and deposited in the government's treasury.

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(Soondewala) 35. Amar Singh (Gurusar) 36. Vir Singh Labarwala and 37. Wazir Singh Rupana.

A cursory glance at this case reveals that no charges of rebellion could be proved against them and it was only the feeling of the Diwan Bakhsh, Deputy Inspector's personal vendetta which became the cause of harassment to these innocent people. Despite all this the articles of Sikhs worth thousands were not returned. This was the strange specimen of British justice. The government's coffers were enriched with the gold and silver worth thousands along with cash in thousands. Sodhi Maan Singh became Honorary Magistrate and some villagers were also given some money as reward. But Mr Turner and his constables remained empty-handed.

The above description shows that the brave heart Kookas were subjected to undue harassment by the police. It would conclude from even their small gatherings that they were meant only to topple the British regime.

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Chapter-17
Kooka Regiment Kashmir

In November 1869AD the government came to know from its intelligence reports that the Maharaja of Kashmir is trying to raise a Kooka platoon and every new recruit going to Kashmir goes there with a certificate from Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji.* At the end of 1869AD a police inspector was sent to Jammu for gathering information regarding the formation of Kooka platoon and its core reality. On return from tour in February 1870AD, he submitted the following report:

Some six or seven months ago, Hira Singh (Ambala district), Tara Singh of Killa Desa Singh (Amritsar district), Lal Singh (of Patiala), Chanda Singh (of Amritsar) and about thirty other Kookas, went to the Maharaja of Kashmir and asked for service. The Maharaja promised to form them into a regiment if they could collect enough men to constitute one; a residence was assigned to them in the lines outside the city of Jammu. Recruiting was commenced, and, at the time of the Deputy Inspector's visit, one hundred and fifty men had been secured. They were, however, not all present, some had left, it is supposed, for their homes. Our informant counted seventy-one Kookas actually present, and noticed that some of them were old men, and a few quiet boys. Hira Singh was stated to be the Commandant, and it was said he was absent recruiting.*

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* Kuka Record, pp. 116-117.

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Relations with Rana Nepal

Kishan Singh, a Kooka of village Granth Garh of district Amritsar worked as servant with Maharana Nepal. Having heard about the reputation of Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji he sent a letter to Bhaini Sahib through Kishan Singh. The Maharana wrote that he longed to have a glimpse of him but due to certain political constraints he could not come to Bhaini Sahib and thus sought forgiveness. Besides, the Maharana requested for sending to him a pair of buffalos having a high milk yield as also a pair of good mules. The satguru did the needful through Baba Kahan Singh and Baba Sahib Singh. The Maharana was immensely pleased at this goodwill gesture. When Baba Kahan Singh and Baba Sahib Singh were inspite of their refusal the Maharana sent by way of gifts the following things to be carried to Bhaini Sahib:

> "A refined breed horse that cost 1400 rupees in Nepal, two *khukhris* (daggers) with golden hilts, a 50-yard roll of *banaat* (woollen cloth, baize), a rosary of 108 musk beads and a *khilta* (probably a robe) which had in one of its pockets a letter the contents of which are still a mystery."

The satguru did not want to accept these gifts. In fact, he had already asked Baba Kahan Singh not to accept any gift from the king. Therefore he expressed his displeasure also to Baba Kahan Singh but when the latter expressed his helplessness he was pardoned. The horse died a few days later due to heat.

Rana Applies for establishment of Kooka Regiment in Nepal

It is said that Maharana sent an application to Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji for establishment of a Kooka Regiment

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* Kuka Record., pp. 92-93.

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in Nepal and also requested him to pay a visit to Nepal. But the satguru refused the both requests. The government's record says in this regard,

"A legend goes around the kuka circles that the Maharana wrote to (Satguru) Ram Singh that he should send some men for recruitment in Kooka regiment. In response, the satguru said, "I will not yet despatch any Kookas, nor will I come myself but I send this present.*" What the government officers understood about these gifts becomes clear from this report, "In order to revive his influence, (Satguru) Ram Singh has determined to send a legate to the ruler of Nepal. The district Superintendent of Lahore mentions that Bhagwan Sing very recently arrived here from Bhaini.**"

DEEWAN BOOTA SINGH AFTAB PRESS

Deewan Boota Singh was the owner of Aftab Press Lahore. Among the Sikhs, it was Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji only who had got the copies of Holy Granth Sahib printed and these too were printed by Deewan Boota Singh in the Aftab Press of Lahore" only. Therefore he had a fairly good interaction with Kooka brave hearts. Describing him as a well-wisher zealot of Kooka panth he added that the mahants and subas of the panth are very much with him. He is consulted before taking all major decisions. He cannot tolerate any well-wisher of the British government***.

About Military Activities of Kookas

Regarding the military enthusiasm of Kookas Col. Hutchinson C.S.I Inspector General writes in his report

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* Kooka Papers, p. 94
** Ibid, p. 93
*** Ibid, p. 94

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submitted on 30 January 1871AD, "During the last year, the Kookas seemingly exhibited a new zeal to get their Sikhs recruited in the forces of Indian kings.* These recruitments need special careful arrangements. War or peace, at no time this is advisable for any government to provide any religious leader an opportunity to let his followers join armed forces. This is the situation when the spiritual leader can push them in the direction he likes for the fulfilment of his political aspirations**.

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* Kooka Papers, P.95

** Ibid, P.96

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Chapter-18

Amritsar Episode

Not only Punjab but almost the whole of India depends for subsistence on agriculture. That is why perhaps, it is known to be an agricultural country. Needless to say that agriculture occupation depends by and large on cows and this is what makes Indians worship the cow as mother. During the times of sages and seers, thousands of cows were reared in the stockades. Each of these stockades was known as 'gotra' and every gotra was known by the name of the owner. The names of number of gotras in India owe their origin to the cow protection. It was due to the existence of cows only that there used to be plenty of milk and milk products in our country and the people used to be very healthy and sturdy. The personages like Bheesham Pitama, Bheem and Arjun are the best examples as testimony to this fact. But there started cow slaughter during the foreign rule*. Guru Nanak Dev and his successors tried their best to stop it. This is what led to protection of defenceless cows as a very important part of every religious faith. Guru Gobind Singh has given the concept of cow-protection more importance when he prays before the primal power Bhagwati saying, "O Goddess! Kindly accept my prayer regarding alleviation of all suffering to the cows."**

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* "Maran gau gareeb nu dharti upar paap bithara." (Vaaran Bhai Gurdas)

** Yahi aas pooran karo tum hamari, mitey kasht gauan chute khed bhari (Dasam Guru Granth)

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Shah-ul-Mulk and the English had given it in writing to Maharaja Ranjit Singh that while passing through Punjab their forces would not resort to cow-slaughter*.

After the death of the Maharaja when Punjab was ruled by Council of Regency on the name of Maharaja Dalip Singh, the first English Resident Sir John Lawrence had got the following orders engraved on a brass plate and hung it outside the outer door of Darbar Sahib. It said,

"There will be no cow-slaughter in Amritsar**.

But by the end of March 1849AD when Punjab was declared to be under the British rule, the first step that the English government took was permission of opening up butcheries in Amritsar. According to the orders of East India Company's Board of Administration, the Governor General of India pronounced this order:

> "In future, nobody will be allowed to interfere with the customs of his neighbour the compliance of which is allowed by his own religion to him."***

Besides, opening butcheries and selling beef was allowed liberally in every city. The order added that the ban imposed earlier was just in deference to the Sikh empire. 'Now that the state of Punjab has come under the English rule, the ban becomes null and void', it said.

This order was tantamount to sprinkling salt on the fresh wounds of Punjabis.**** It was treated all over the country as

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* Ahadnama Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Year 1937.

** Kine are not to be killed at Amritsar- John Lawrence, 24-3-1846.

*** Kooka file central, p. 3

****This order aimed at telling the people that now they were the rulers of Punjab. They wanted to show that the area where they were treated as outsiders and ban was imposed on them that they would not be allowed slaughter of cows had come under them. This air of arrogance had become an eyesore for the founder of Kooka Movement.

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a challenge to the dignity of Punjabis. But what could anybody do particularly when the gallant brave hearts of Punjab were either killed or imprisoned by the state. The common populace was helpless. That is why the government took advantage of the situation and started the implementation of the draconian order from Amritsar itself. A slaughter-house was opened outside Lahori Gate and the butchers were allowed to sell beef in the city. It created uproar in the city. The Hindus and Sikhs started agitations. It gave way to several feuds and litigation. The government's own record shows that after merger of Punjab with English rule, Hindu-Muslim riots took place during 13-14 years of British rule.

Four cases among them deserve special mention here:

1. Before the Deputy Commissioner M.C.Saunders on 20 May 1849AD.
2. In the court of Mr. F. Kapur on 7May 1856AD.
3. Before the Deputy Commissioner Major Mercers on 28 May 1863AD.
4. In the court of Mr. D. Macnabb's court in Nov. 1864

In 1863, this matter was reported by Major Mercer before the high authorities. On 29 June 1863AD gave judgment on review No. 128 and gave still more liberty to the Muslims of Amritsar than earlier*.

Debate over Issuance of Contract on Slaughter-House in Municipal Committee Amritsar

On 22 May 1871AD Municipal Committee Amritsar held a meeting to discuss whether the contract of slaughter-house in the city should be cancelled or extended. Mr. W. Davis, the Commissioner of Amritsar Division delivered a lengthy speech in this meeting and advocated extension of the contract.

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* Kooka file central, p. 10

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With the majority consensus of the English members, the extension of butchery was unanimously accepted*.

Hindu-Muslim Dispute on Nimani Ekadashi

The Municipal Committee's decision to continue the abattoir had a very injurious effect on the hearts of both Hindus and Sikhs. A few days hereafter the Hindus- most of them braziers and traders- boycotted the Muslim potters. As per the custom, on the occasion of Nimani Ekadashi, the Hindus used to buy pitchers from the Muslim potters. This year also they made potters but due to the resentment caused by the butchery the Hindus did not buy even a single pot from the Muslims**. With the intervention of administration dispute between the two communities was averted for the time being but the government came to realize that the extension given to the butchery had created animosity against the Muslims among Hindus and Sikhs.

Commissioner Holds a Durbar in Town Hall Amritsar on 3 June 1871AD

On 3 June 1871AD, W. G. Davis, the Acting Commissioner Amritsar held a well-attended durbar in the Town Hall. The members of the Municipal Committee, the Hindu, Sikh and Muslim heads of all localities and all European officers were invited to this meeting. The Commissioner delivered a lengthy speech in Urdu language on the issue of cow slaughter.

An excerpt from the speech is being given here as under:

Speech:

You are well aware that over the last some time a sense of bitterness has gripped the minds of Hindus and Muslims

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* Kooka file, pp. 2,3,4.

** Ibid., p. 5

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of the city over the issue of cow slaughter. Some feuds have also taken place between the two sides. This is worth mention here that in 1847AD during the reign of Maharaja Dalip Singh, Sikh Durbar was run by a Council of native members and the Governor General had issued orders that killing of cows was prohibited in Amritsar. But ever since Punjab has come under the rule of British Government, the Governor General has written vide his Secretary's letter No. 175 dated 25 April 1849AD by which he has made amends in the earlier orders and announced that in future nobody will be allowed to interfere with the customs of his neighbour through his conduct which his faith otherwise permits. The Governing Council Secretary added that the ban on cow slaughter was a provisional management in respect for the Sikh rule; so it will be lifted now. Besides, a particular site will be fixed in every big city for killing the cows and selling beef and beef will not be sold openly on shops in the city.

The Muslims trying to hurt the sentiments of their Hindu neighbours just wantonly will be liable to be punished. These orders were enforced by C.B. Saunders in Amritsar and got a yard built outside the city to ensure that Hindu sentiments are not hurt. Open sale of beef in the inner city shops was banned. Ever since, this method has remained in force. However, sporadic skirmishes were reported here and there but these were dealt with sternly according to the civic rules. This method will continue for the times to come as well. But if someone brings a little quantity of beef properly and well-covered in the city, it will be permitted. The butchers too have been made to pledge that these rules will never be defied.

The nobles, panches and leaders of localities! Motivate the people of your respective areas with the use of your good offices that they should abide by the laid down policies of government and avoid indulgence in futile altercations.

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Neither the Muslims are allowed to meddle with Hindus' affairs nor are the Hindus at liberty to hinder ways of Muslims. In future, all should live together peacefully like one fraternity the way you are sitting here. I advise you all this- as a friend, not officer. I don not need tell you what the law says and what punishment its violation invites".*

Implications of the Speech

We have seen so far that:

1. Killing of cows was prohibited all over Punjab not only Amritsar before the annexation of Punjab with British rule.
2. Immediately after the inclusion of Punjab in the English rule, the Viceroy of India announced opening up of butcheries and sale of beef not only in Amritsar but all over Punjab on 5 May, 1849.
3. A slaughter-house was opened immediately in Amritsar and the sale of beef was allowed in the city of Amritsar. As a result, the religious sentiments of Amritsar-based Hindus and Sikhs were badly hurt. It triggered Hindu-Muslim riots for several years.
4. Caring three hoots for the Hindu-Sikh sentiments, the Municipal Committee decided to continue the butcheries and passed a resolution on 22nd May 1871, extending the contract to the butchers for the next year also. Consequently, the Hindu and Sikh braziers and common Hindus of the city decided not to buy pitchers from the Muslim potters.
5. With a view to exercising control over the situation, Mr. Davis, the Commissioner of Amritsar held a durbar in the Town Hall Amritsar where he tried to clarify in his speech in Urdu language the government's viewpoint on opening up the abattoirs

* Kooka files, pp. 11-14.

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in the presence of Hindu, Sikh and Muslim gentry of the city. The Commissioner's speech made the Hindus and Sikhs of the city firmly believe that the phenomenon of cow slaughter and sale of beef has become officially regularised now and the defiants will be liable to be rigorously punished.

Abattoir in Place of Ghantaghar (Clock-Tower)

What is most unfortunate in this regard is that the place where Ghanta Ghar is situated today was an open space at that time. An abattoir was opened there with its eastern wall common with Durbar Sahib's periphery. The Hindus and Sikhs of the city raised a great hue and cry against it but all in vain.

The Kookas' Advice

It has been mentioned in earlier pages that the Kooka Movement was at its prime during this period. Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji and his subas were anxious to free the country from the curse of British slavery. Ready to sacrifice their lives they had already plunged in the arena. The government was on the lookout for an excuse to crush their movement. Most of the Kookas had witnessed the days when cow slaughter was officially banned in Punjab. Due to the influence of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, even the pathans of Kabul and the whites of England did not dare to kill the cows in Punjab. Shuja-ul-Mulk, the ruler of Kabul and the representative of the British had given it in black and white that their forces would not resort to cow killing within the boundaries of Punjab. A small band of Kookas felt that this announcement was a challenge and an attempt to know whether the grain of dignity has disappeared from the Sikh blood. When they took stock of their organization they felt that they would not as yet get permission to do anything in the direction of closing down the abattoirs but still the very persistence of these

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houses of sacrilege was intolerable to them. Finally they decided that some action must be done to close down slaughter houses not only in Amritsar but all over Punjab. The challenge of the government have to be met. At least they should know that the Sikh is not dead; he is still alive. So they chalked out a program thinking that if it succeeds, the country would be purged of this heinous sin and curse and the cows would be protected. The oxen will survive and make the farmers comfortable on financial pitch. It will benefit all. The second situation is that of failure. In this situation they will be killed and leave the world before the execution of the great cause for which the Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji is struggling.

So, a little band of about maximum ten Kooka brave heart Sikhs set out on their way to execute the plan for wiping out the very existence of butcheries from not only Amritsar but all over Punjab. First, they were very much pained to see the slaughter house near Lahori Gate. But their unrest knew no bounds when they saw another in the Ghanta Ghar ground near Darbar sahib. They noticed kites and vultures carrying the pieces of flesh in their beaks and throwing into the sacred sarovar- an exceedingly blasphemous act. They felt agitated at heart. At last they reached the house of their associate Lehna Singh- a carpenter. There they held a havan and prayed for the success of their cause. Every one of them took a pledge saying, "O God! Give us the strength to succeed in the cause for which we have girded up our loins. We have no selfish interest of our own in it. This is in public as well as national interest. Bless us either to be successful or be martyred."

Attack on Slaughter House

At last, on the intervening night of 14 and 15 June 1871AD they attacked the slaughter house near Durbar Sahib

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and then the other one. On first, they un-tethered the cows and let them loose. They were kept there for killing. Later, they killed whosoever came forward to resist them and went their way. When the police came to know about this incident they arrested the Nihangs under suspicion who in those days were the priests in Akal Bunga. Besides, some Hindus were also apprehended under suspicion. The police booked the innocents and subjected the nihangs- who were called Akalis in those days- to third degree torture. This torture made them confess the crime which they had not committed at all. The British judiciary also made a travesty of its jurisprudence by punishing these innocent confessors.

The Kooka Sikhs make Confession

By sheer chance, the real perpetrators of crime reached Bhaini Sahib and met Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji. The Master asked them about the Amritsar butcher-murder case.

"They have been sentenced to gallows, Satguru. But this would be sinful to tell a lie before you. As a matter of fact, we are the real murderers."

"O Sikhs! This is not fair that someone else should suffer for your deeds. So reach Amritsar immediately and get the guilty freed. You must face the consequence of what you have done*."

The Sikhs bowed their heads before the Master's command. They reached Amritsar and confessed their crime. First, the officers thought that these monks wanted to take the punishment of others on themselves only due to compassion for the nihang Sikhs. But when they came up with the minutest details of the crime and even got the weapons used recovered, they trusted the Kookas. The authorities were very much impressed with this suicidal

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* Gurdwara Reform Movement, p. 38.

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confession meant to rescue the innocents from undue punishment.

In the Session Judge's Court

The trial of these dauntless Kookas continued for three consecutive days 28, 29 and 30 August in the court of Major W.G. Davis. It concluded on 31 August 1871AD as under:

Death Sentence (4)

1. Lehna Singh s/o Musada Singh Amritsar
2. Fateh Singh............
3. Hakam Singh Patwari Maure, district Amritsar.
4. Beehla Singh Naarli, district Amritsar.

Exiled to Kaale Pani (Andeman Nicobar Islands)

5. Lehna Singh s/o Bulaaka Singh...........
6. Sepoy Lal Singh........

Absconders (3)

7. Mehar Singh Lopke, district Amritsar
8. Jhanda Singh r/o Thatta (Near Lopoke)
9. Arhbang Singh (Lachhman Singh), Marana District Amritsar

These three Absconders could not be apprehended by the police despite all efforts. Lehna Singh Lopoki was acquitted.

Confirmation of Sentence

As per Section 398 of Criminal Procedure Code, the Sessions Judge sent his judgment for certification to the Chief Court Lahore. Justice J.Campbell confirmed the sentence on 9 September 1871AD while Justice C.R. Lindse did so on 11 September 1871AD.

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CHAPTER- 19

THE PATRIOTS ON GALLOWS

The word about the certification of sentence spread like wild fire in the streets of Amritsar. The patriotic Sikhs had earned a great applause when they had rescued the innocents with their clean confession to the authorities but now they came to be known as '*Zinda Shaheed'* (living martyrs). From the day of pronouncement of sentence to the day of hanging, they were allowed a daily *darshan* of Darbar Sahib and eating self-made food. The raw material for the food was arranged by some Kooka Sikhs. 15 September 1871AD was the day of execution. The Sikhs had a bath in the holy sarovar of Durbar Sahib at the ambrosial hour and then distributed 'karah parsad' also. They also got permission for playing music on cymbals and dholki. Wow! What a spectacle! One of the Sikhs has the dholki slinging from his neck while the others played cymbals. Lo and behold! These Sikhs are going to the gallows amidst chant of gurbani hymns. It seems as if they are not aware of their immediate destiny. The spectators are astonished to see this sight. They seem to be going for attending a wedding. And, certainly there is no doubt in it. They are going to wed the bride of Death. This is what makes them so hilarious. They were to be hanged from a banyan tree on Majitha Road near the site of today's civil hospital. The procession of Sikhs reaches the spot. There is a crowd of onlookers there. When asked by the authorities to say

something on the last moments of their life, they said,

"1.We should not be hanged with ordinary rope.

2.We shall wear the noose around our necks ourselves".

Both the demands were accepted. Silken ropes were prepared for them. The Sikhs prayed with the satguru in their hearts and jumped forward to put the noose around their necks. Chanting Sat Sri Akal they swung on the gallows.

The people around were all praise for this grand show of gallantry.

The Martyr's Mother

Hakam Singh- the martyr was the only son of his widow mother. The poor mother had arrived there with the bale of fuel wood for the cremation of her son by dismantling her living room. She gave all the four martyrs a bath with water from the sarovar of Sri Harimandar Sahib Amritsar and cremated them while chanting verses from Guru Granth Sahib. In response to people's condolence she said,

"I am proud mother of my son who has laid down his life for the protection of cow and freedom of the country as blessed by the satguru.

This martyrdom left such an impact on the people all over the country who eulogised this martyrdom with this verse:

Janani janahi ta bhagat jan kei data kei soor,
*Nahi ta janani baanjh rahe kaahe gavaave noor.**

(A mother should give birth to a child who is either a devotee or charitable or brave otherwise it's better for her to remain childless and not waste her sheen.)

The justice-loving approach of Sri Satguru Ram Singh

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* ਜਨਨੀ ਜਨਹਿ ਤ ਭਗਤ ਜਨ ਕੈ ਦਾਤਾ ਕੈ ਸੂਰ,
ਨਹੀ ਤਾ ਜਨਨੀ ਬਾਂਝ ਰਹਿ ਕਾਹਿ ਗਵਾਵਹਿ ਨੂਰ।

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Ji was being highly admired everywhere as he helped remove the noose of gallows from the necks of the innocent and made his own Sikhs wear it. This way, he had favoured the nihangs (Akalis) who had prevented him from saying 'ardas' at Akal Takht on the occasion of *Deep mala* 1867AD. By saving them from undeserved death he had illustrated the message enshrined in the following verse of Baba Farid:

> *Farida bure da bhala kar gussa mann na handhai.**
>
> (O Farid! Do good to the bad and do not nurse any resentment against anybody in your mind.)

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* ਫਰੀਦਾ ਬੁਰੇ ਦਾ ਭਲਾ ਕਰਿ ਗੁਸਾ ਮਨਿ ਨ ਹਢਾਇ॥

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Chapter- 20

On Amritsar Incident

In the Eyes of Other Historians

In this book titled "Gurdwara Reform Movement & the Sikh Awakening", Prof. Ruchi Ram Sahni writes:

"Some namdharis chanced to pass through Lahori Darwaza, Amritsar where quite contrary to the old tradition and Sir John Lawrence's orders that there will be no killing of cows in Amritsar, a slaughter house was opened there. There was a rumour in the air that four other shops are going to be opened in the city. It had created a lot of resentment among Hindus and Sikhs. The namdhari Sikhs who were deadly against cow slaughter came to Amritsar with a pre-contemplated plan in mind, pounced on the butchers, killed some of them and went their way.....As Baba Ram Singh came to know, he called the killers and said that 'some innocent nihangs have been arrested for the crime committed by you.' He asked them to surrender in the court so that the innocents are not killed. Obeying the command of the satguru they went and confessed their crime before the authorities thus leaving themselves at the mercy of fate." (P.38)

2. Bhai Parmanand M.A. M.L.A. writes in his Urdu book titled "Twareekh-e-Punjab":

"In 1871AD some namdhari enthusiasts were bitterly agitated to think as to why cows are killed in the holy city of Amritsar. Therefore they went there one night and butchered

all the butchers. It created uproar in the city. The commissioner arrested the Hindu nobles of the city under suspicion that it was conspired by them. The murderers informed Baba Ram Singh themselves in this regard. Baba Ram Singh rebuked them saying that 'since the crime has been committed by you, so it's your duty to confess it and save the innocents booked in this case'. As a result they were prosecuted and sentenced to gallows." (P. 561)

3. **Shriyut Pundit Sunder Lal,** the author of "Bharat Mein Angrezi Raj" (The British Rule in India) had written an article in the Allahabad-based monthly 'Vishav Bani' (Hindi) (Page 701-711). He says:

"There used to be an open ground those days at the site where Ghanta Ghar is situated today in Amritsar. The new government opened a slaughter house there. The people objected to this unfortunate development but nobody listened to them. As a result some irate namdharis killed some butchers and released cows from their custody. Having committed this dutiful crime they decamped from the city. Some Hindus and Sikhs were arrested from the city under suspicion. The police made them confess the crime through giving them third degree torture. When Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji came to know about it he ordered the namdhari killers to surrender and confess their crime to save the innocents. They obeyed the Master with the result that they were hanged and the innocents were acquitted." (p. 704 June 1942)

(4)"Thesis on the Namdhari Movement" mentions that:

"After some thinking over they resolved that this holy city has to be cleansed of vice even by laying down lives....On the night of 14 June 1871AD they attacked the abattoirs. This act was taken very seriously by the authorities.

They pressed their total machinery to find out the

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perpetrators of this crime and announced a prize of one thousand rupees for anyone who came with any information on this case.*

Mr. Christie who had repute for his ability and experience in tracking the cases was assigned the probe of these killings.

The history of police investigation illustrates the procedure adopted by these peace makers sometimes for their promotion. Before 29th. of July the police arrested 13 nihangs and several others who had absolutely nothing to do with this case and subjected them to unbearable torture for extorting confession from them. Three of them were made approvers for 'unveiling the supposed conspiracy' while the case against the remaining ten accused was presented in the court of Major Davis, Commissioner and Sessions Judge. The evidence given in the case was quite fabricated. The police tortured them to the extent of confessing that they had killed the butchers.**

The Sessions Judge sentenced the nihangs who had made confession under duress to hanging till death. But the reality of the case came to light only after Baba Ram Singh threatened the real culprits and compelled them to go and produce themselves before the judge for confession. With this disclosure, the case was reviewed and the innocents booked under the charges of murder were acquitted. From among the real culprits four were sentenced to death while the three exiled to Andeman and Nicobar popularly known as Kalepani.***

.......The spunk that those martyrs exhibited at the last hour of their life added to the honour of Kooka Sikhs in

* 'Majmaul Behreen', an Urdu weekly dated 22 July 1871, p. 12

** Ibid., pp. 50-53.

*** Government's pronouncement No. 1060 dated 1o/9/1871.

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totality." On Butcher-killing case the letter No. 423 dated 1/7/1871 by Major Birch, Deputy Commissioner Amritsar to the Commissioner Amritsar is worth reading. Birch writes*:

"I deem it my duty to record here some incidents which paved way for the committal of this crime.

1. In the beginning the slaughter-house was threatened by the nihangs. I had reported this vide my letter dated 8 May. On 5 May police force was deployed to guard the butchery. However, it was removed on 31 May. This, I think, was a great blunder on our part.
2. On 2 June, acting upon an appeal, the release of butchers was ordered. It cleared decks for the Hindus to commit the crime. Definitely it angered them as this decision had dashed to the ground their hopes of getting legal relief.
3. This year witnessed the cow slaughter more in comparison to the earlier years. Naturally this hurt the reputed Hindus. The parties which had their vested interest in selling beef cared little for their sentiments. I had kept this very view in my mind. It had led me to punish the butchers at personal level.
4. The consequence of official proceedings was generally against the Hindus. So they had a sense of failure in this regard. This is what made them revengeful for their own gratification.

Mr. Birch deserves kudos for the candour and out spokenness he has employed in his letter. While he has admitted his mistake he has also tried to castigate the butchers as culprits. But the fact that the government itself was the progenitor of this crime cannot be ruled out as it was only in the wake of government's declaration of open

* Kuka File Central P.16-18

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the slaughter houses and sale of beef. Caring little about the vociferous agitation of Hindus and Sikhs about closure of butcheries, the Commissioner stressed upon allowing them to continue. The passage of resolution for keeping up the abattoir by the Municipal Council on 22 May 1871AD simply added fuel to the fire. Delving deep into the recesses of the issue reveals that the namdhari brave hearts decided to kill the butchers when they became sure that the legal ways of closing down the slaughter house stood exhausted. It reminded them of Guru Gobind Singh's memorable words that wielding sword is genuine when all other methods are timed out.

Choon kaar az hama heelte dar guzasht,
*halal ast burden ba shamsheer dast.**

So taking the government's decision of permitting the slaughter house to continue as direct interference in the religious affairs, the spunky namdharis made a program which if succeeded, could purge not just Punjab but whole India of the stigma of cow slaughter.

As regards the responsibility fixation, the government itself is responsible for this fiasco. The situation had been created by its cunning policy that aimed at making Punjab a market place for the sale of beef.

Had Guru Ram Singh not sent the Singhs for Voluntary Martyrdom ?

The government's record brings out a strange story on the detection of killers. It has been put forward by an adversary of namdharis just recently. It goes like this:

"When the namdhari brave hearts were sentenced punishment in Raikot butcher killings (which took place

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* ਚੂੰ ਕਾਰ ਅਜ਼ ਹਮ ਹੀਲਤੇ ਦਰ ਗੁਜ਼ਸ਼ਤ। ਹਲਾਲ ਅਸਤ ਬੁਰਦਨ ਬ ਸ਼ਮਸ਼ੀਰ ਦਸਤ।
(ਜ਼ਫ਼ਰਨਾਮਾ)

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exactly one month after the Amritsar killings) and the same was confirmed also by the chief court then Gulab Singh, one of the convicts said that if his life is spared he is ready to unravel the circumstances of the Amritsar case as he was one of the accomplices. Therefore he was taken to Amritsar where he narrated the circumstances that led to the murder of butchers in the holy city. The accused in Amritsar killings were thus arrested on the basis of information given by Gulab Singh."

This story stands in sharp contrast with the one famed earlier. It seems to have been concocted to eclipse the spirit of the martyrs impelled by which they obeyed the satguru and volunteered themselves for martyrdom for the rescue of innocent nihangs implicated by the police in the case. Moreover, this version seems purported to deprive Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji of the credit which was his due in this respect. It is quite common with the police to fabricate such stories in suchlike situations. This has become evident from this very case. It has been mentioned earlier how the investigation officers led by the Superintendent Police Mr. Christie prosecuted 13 innocent nihangs and some Hindus in the court on the basis of fake evidence against them and how the judiciary sentenced them to gallows. Therefore it needs no special effort to describe the ways of the police which prepares such cock and bull stories to conceal the facts. So there is nothing to raise eyebrows at the registration of such imagined details in government's records. It has earlier been told with reference to more than one historian that Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji had sent the real culprits for confession of crime and rescue of the innocents. Here is an attempt to wind up this controversy with only two references.

Principal Teja Singh writes in his book "Essays in Sikhism":

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"A killer escaped the brunt of istgasa (criminal case filed by the aggrieved party) as he had been acquitted by the court. He immediately went to the Sessions Judge under the influence of Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji, confessed his complicity and accepted the punishment gleefully. During the rainy season in 1871AD, some namdharis were passing through Lahori Darwaza where a slaughter house was set up against the orders of John Lawrence issued in 1847AD and the old traditions. It was also in the air that four other shops of butchers are about to be opened in the city. Hindus and Sikhs were very bitter at this dismal state of affairs. The namdharis who were deadly against cow slaughter deliberated the issue and came to the city with a purpose. They attacked the butchers, killed some of them and decamped from there. As Baba Ram Singh came to know about the crime he asked them sternly to go to the court and confess their crime for which the innocent nihangs had been implicated by the police. Therefore, they obeyed the Master and left themselves on the mercy of Destiny.*

2. Sardar Tara Singh, the author of "Thesis on the Namdhari Movement" writes:

"It has been imagined about the culprits of Amritsar butcher killings that a tip off to this effect was received in the Raikot case but it cannot be denied that so long as the real culprits had not surrendered themselves on volition nobody had an iota of doubt that the nihangs or Akalis against whom death sentence had also been pronounced by the court already were quite innocent.**

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* pp. 122-123

** p. 59

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CHAPTER- 20

THE RAIKOT CASE

Raikot is a famous town of district Ludhiana. It is a road distance of 25 miles from Ludhiana and has close connection with Sikh history. While going towards Lakhi jungle from Machhiwada, Guru Gobind Singh had stopped here. Rai Kalle, the owner of this village had served the guru on this occasion with great devotion. As per the orders of the great Master, he had sent a messenger named 'Malhi' to Sirhind and obtained information about the martyrdom of his younger sons and Mata Gujri. Pleased at the hospitality of Rai Kalle, the guru had gifted him a sword and a 'garhwa' (small pitcher-shaped metal vessel) also. It was a magically designed vessel from the very small pores-like holes of which the sand motes would fall on the ground but water did not ooze out at all. A gurdwara is situated there on this site today to commemorate this incident.

20-25 days after the Amritsar killings, a band of Kookas moving towards Bhaini Sahib passed by this gurdwara. As they noticed pieces of flesh and bones scattered near the shrine and enquired about it from the gurdwara priest (s) they were told with an anguished heart:

"Look yonder! Those are the huts of the butchers where cows are slaughtered daily in broad daylight. It is really very disturbing to see the vultures picking up pieces of flesh and bones from there and dropping them near the gurdwara. It

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is highly sacrilegious. Maybe this is the punishment given to us for some misdeeds of ours in the earlier lives. Brothers! Truly speaking there is no point in living such a disgraceful life."

The agony of the gurdwara priests made their eyes red shot with fury.

"Don't worry. The guru will set the things right," they solaced them only with these words on that particular occasion. Then they left this place and had a stay in Tajpur, a nearby village. They stayed for night in Tajpur and decided that for saving the cows and restoration of the sanctity of the gurdwara, the butchers must be eliminated. So as per this resolve, only three saints- Sant Mangal Singh, Sant Gurmukh Singh and Sant Mastan- of Pitho, Riyasat Nabha performed ardas on 15 July 1871AD and attacked the butchers of Raikot. Having killed some butchers they ran away from the site.

This happened one month after the Amritsar killing episode. The government announced a cash prize of 1000/- rupees for anyone giving a clue of the killers. So under the temptation of money Dallu of Chheeniwal and Gulabu of Marhana informed the police and got two saints Sant Giani Singh and Sant Ratan Singh Naianwala also arrested along with the actual killers. All the three kukas confessed their crime and said that the suba Giani Singh and Rattan Singh was not in complicity with them in the crime. The police issued challans against the accused by making both the informers its approvers. The approvers were made to issue such statements as might prove all the five Kookas as murderers.

After cursory proceedings in the basic court, the case was taken to J.W. Macnabb, the Commissioner and the court of Sessions Judge Ambala. Enforcing Section 302 of Indian Penal Code, the saint-trio viz.-Mastan Singh, Mangal Singh

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and Gurmukh Singh- was sentenced to gallows on 27 July 1871AD while Dallu and Gulabu were pardoned. The case of death sentence was sent for confirmation to the Chief Court and it was done by Justice Bolonuis and J. S. Campbell on 1st August 1871AD. As a result, these beloved Sikhs of Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji were hanged from a tree near Bassian Kothi on 5 August 1871AD.

Giani Singh and Ratan Singh Naiwala were sentenced to death under section 109-302 (intentional murder) on 26 October 1871AD. After the confirmation of this sentence by the Chief Court they were hanged in the District Jail Ludhiana on 26 November 1871AD.

Macnabb's Report

The Acting Deputy Commissioner Ambala J.W.Macnabb was ordered by the government to submit a report on Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji and the aims and objectives of Kooka Movement. Macnabb filed detailed report on 4 November 1871. A gist of the report is being given herewith:

"Following the publication of reports by the Central Police Office (CPO) on September 1867 and 68AD, there is hardly any scope to elaborate the founding of this sect. The chain of correspondence that took place between the CPO and General Tailor reveals the viewpoint of General Taylor and the government about the Kuka Sect. The plea put forward in this correspondence had made me believe that the leader of the sect may be having whatever intent and purpose in the beginning but now his goal is political. I came to know from old documents that Ram Singh was treated as successor or reincarnation of Guru Nanak Dev but now he is being revered as Guru Gobind Singh in new human garb.

In the above reports there was no mention of any Sardar

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except Mangal Singh Bishanpura (patiala) joined this sect, but now there are several nobles of this stature in this sect viz. The Sikh nobles of Khumano (Patiala Riyasat) which is not very far from Bhaini Sahib, Sardar Gurditt Singh Naiwala of Patiala Riyasat, Sardar Bir Singh of Dyalgarh along with his three nephews, Gursaran Singh of Mustafabad, Hira Singh, a landlord of Sadhaura who had gone to Jammu as Command Officer for the formation of Kooka Platoon along with his 100 men, Bhai Beda Singh cousin of the Honorary Magistrate Sohana, Sardar Jaimal Singh and Sardar Dalip Singh, a landlord of Kalsian.

District Ambala is full of the high class Sikh families. There are very few families of horse riders but they don't have enough means of livelihood. Although they are not as belligerent as the Sikhs of Majha region but still they are provoking the Sikhs to bring back Khalsa Raj. They are potential Kooka stuff.

It was said a year previous to the last year that Ram Singh is recruiting the Sikhs to form a Kooka-platoon for Kashmir. For the time being, about 300 men were gathered in Jammu under the command of Hira Singh. Later, this platoon was disbanded.

Treaty with Rana Nepal

Last year, Suba Bir Singh and Suba Maan Singh* had gone to Nepal with some gifts for the Prince of Nepal.

Strong Organization

A strong action is needed to prevent this community from achieving its political goal. The whole gamut of their

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* That Suba Bir Singh and Suba Maan Singh had gone to Nepal is a factual error in Macnabb's report. In fact, the satguru had sent Baba Kahan Singh and Baba Sahib Singh to Nepal.

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operation including organization of community at district level, appointment of district heads, management of dissemination of their philosophy among the Sikhs in Lucknow, Hydrabad or wherever there is Sikh population and opposing tooth and nail anything that goes against the Sikh norms indicates towards their political ambitions.

Sri Satguru Ram Singh's Majestic Posture

(Satguru) Ram Singh has no pretantion to be the saintly fakir. He visits you attended by half a dozen horsemen, he is followed by scores of men on foot, he comes into your room surrounded by a court like a prince. He and his people are dressed in exquisitely fine white clothes.

Opposed to Licentiousness

Libertinism or licentiousness is strictly prohibited in their faith. Fidelity of relations is one of their basic tenets.*

Giani Singh is Suba Magistrate and Leader

Suba Giani Singh wisher to account for his presense at this village or that, he says has gone to one to settle a dispute between some kukas.....In fact he is a magistrate and a leader, not a spiritual guide.

Kooka Movement is Political

The subas I have seen are young, daring-looking men. The Kukas I have seen are, with a few exceptionns as observed, I think by Mr. L.P. Elliot remarkable for their powerful frames. I think the natural dedication from the above is that the movement has become (whatever it was in its beginning) a political and not a purely religious movement.

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* Report Mr. J. Macnabb, Kooka Papers

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The Consistency of Satguru's Character

"It has next to be shown that (Satguru) Ram Singh is not a mere puppet in the hands of designing men. I have shown the state he keeps. No one who has been seen and talked with (Satguru) Ram Singh will have failed to observe an intelligence, firmness and decision of character, which coupled also with great self-restraint do not belong to a mere relgious enthusiast still less to a puppet.....He was most careful about only speaking to one at a time, but he was the main spring of the action, the people evidently trusting not his Subas but him.*

Kooka Literature and Deewan Buta Singh Lahore

Every literate Kooka has in his hand the book published by Deewan Buta Singh Lahore. It is full of all references which are invigorating for participation in war. These verses form a part of Guru Gobind Singh's Chandi Di Var and Ugrardanti. They have three other books also:

Sau Sakhi- It is just like an old religious text which has the names of Ram Singh and his father.

The second book is a dialogue of Ajita Randhawa. It is just like the first one.

The third book is *'Karni Nama'*. It carries prophesy how Khalsa will oust the English from India and control the Delhi.

Inspector Imdad Ali says he gave up copies of these books seized in Bela Singh's (Amritsar murder) house to Mr. Turton Smith who has translated them.

Rebellious Nature of Kooka Books

The above mentioned three Kooka books are rebellious in nature. Sau Sakhi, Ajita's dialogue and others including **Chandi** and **Ugardanti**. All the three books are hand-written.

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* J.W. Macnabb Report: Kuka Papers, p. 47.

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Kooka against to Britain

Ram Singh is a unique leader of a sect who is inimical to the British regime. He is all out to revive the Khalsa Raj abolished by the Empire. He has vowed to murder all the butchers of Punjab. I believe that the murder of butchers who are running their business as per the British law means a head-on confrontation against the regime. Keeping this in view and in the larger interest of law and order, Ram Singh must be exiled to a place where the Sikhs are unable to see him. His subas should be placed under house arrest and their deewans need to be strictly banned.

I am of the firm opinion that Ram Singh should be exiled for life. In case, there is nothing substantial against him for suing him in the court, then action can be initiated under Act-3 of 1818AD. And, this action must be taken before the troops march towards Delhi. I think he will not even think of fighting against the regime on equal footing and produce himself on ordinary summons but still stringent security arrangements must be made in Ludhiana. Army has to be kept alert in Jalandhar as Deewan Buta Singh enjoys great influence in the printing houses of Lahore. Therefore, it will not be advisable to get this letter published.

Essence of Report

A perusal of Macnabb's reports makes it amply clear that Kooka Movement was at its peak during those days and its leader Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji was revered as reincarnation of Guru Nanak Dev and Guru Gobind Singh. The organization had a political character and very strong. The dissemination of Kooka norms by organizing the Sikhs was at its best not only in Punjab but also in other states of India. The renowned nobles and landlords of Punjab had joined this organization. An exclusively Kooka Platoon had

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been raised in Kashmir and the ruler of Nepal was also keen to form a Kooka Regiment.

The subas were very fearless and espoused unflinchingly to the Kooka tenets. Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji was not like any typical fakir. He maintained a royal posture and while meeting the English officers it looked as if some king was going to meet them in their camp with the retinue of his courtiers. The prime objective of his life was to liberate Punjab from the clutches of English rule. This was what made Kooka organization inimical to the British Empire. Macnabb opined that the episodes of killing in Amritsar and Raikot were not only in his knowledge but were executed in connivance with him. He did not consider the satguru as a puppet in the hands of crafty people. He admits that anyone who spoke to him once could not help being swayed under his influence due to his intellect, high moral character, resoluteness and self-restraint. Macnabb says that these qualities cannot be found in any ordinary religious leader. Thus having realized that the Master possessed such rare qualities of head and heart, the English officer viewed him as a substantial threat to the British Empire. He feels that the Kooka Movement launched by him has the potential of exterminating the British rule from India. Therefore, he comes out with an advice to his superiors that to guard the regime against Kooka Movement, Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji should be prosecuted in the court and sentenced to exile for life. The subas should be placed under house-arrest and a ban should be imposed on their gatherings. If at all it is not possible to book him under any charges, at least he must be house-arrested under Section 3 of 1818 Act, he advised. Macnabb felt this was the only way of protecting the British rule.

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Chapter-22

The Martyrdoms at Malerkotla

The Malerkotla martyrdom is a page in the history of Kooka Movement which is spattered with the blood of Kookas martyred for the cause of country's freedom and cow-protection. This massacre is the root of troubles and tribulations of Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji and his spunky Sikhs. In fact this incident is the backbone of Kooka history. It is only suchlike incidents which have the capacity of transforming the very destiny of nations. Had the influential and affluent class of Sikhs along with the priest class dominating the gurdwara management not sided with the English against Kookas, the map of Punjab (if not India as a whole) would have been different. In that case, it would not have the streak of martyrs' blood and liberated about fifty years earlier with the flag of freedom fluttering atop the royal fort of Lahore.

The heart-rending sight of Kooka brave hearts' martyrdom makes one think as to what extent Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji had infused new life in the almost lifeless body of the Khalsa Panth. He had raised a generation of self-sacrificing warriors for fighting against the British regime to cut asunder the chains of India's slavery.

Root of the Incident

Before coming out with the details of this barbarous act

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it would be pertinent to look into the circumstances that led to this gory episode. There may be many other covert reasons but overtly the following six reasons seem to have precipitated the situation to this point:

1. Death/ exile sentences pronounced against the Kookas in the cases pertaining to killings of Kookas in Amritsar and Raikot.
2. Stringent punishment to the Kookas under the charges of Muranda cow-protection.
3. Execution of the innocent Suba Giani Singh and Sant Ratan Singh Naiwala in the Ludhiana Jail on 26 November 1871AD.
4. Killing of the Ram-cows grazing in the Malerkotla jungle.
5. Malerkotla Hindus' pathetic appeal to Sardar Hira Singh Sakraudi for cow protection.
6. Killing of an ox before the eyes of Gurmukh Singh, the Numbardar of village Farwahi of Riyasat Malerkotla in the Kotwali of Kotla and heaping insult on him.

Only the last one from the above six causes needs clarification. It aired the brewing embers of the other five causes. It so happened that Gurmukh Singh Nambardar (a Kooka) was going to Kotla for depositing revenue. While passing through the bazaar of Malerkotla he noticed a vegetable vendor riding an ox with a load of radishes. He urged the man to be merciful to the animal but rather than listening to the voice of sanity the vegetable-seller started calling him names. The dispute attracted some other supporters of the errant vegetable vendor on the spot. They manhandled the revenue official and dragged him to the Kotwali. The police-officer in-charge caricatured the very

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sense of justice by getting the ox killed before the very eyes of Gurmukh Singh just to hurt the sentiments of the Sikh. Not to stop here, the poor nambardar was beaten up and pushed out of the kotwali. The poor fellow returned to Bhaini Sahib from there itself without depositing the revenue.

Mata Jassan Fair

Satguru Ram Singh's wife Mata Jassan had passed away in November 1871AD. A fair was scheduled to be held on 11-12 January 1872AD for recitation and conclusion of 101 gurbani paths in her memory. The Sikhs were agitated against the rulers due to the martyrdom of Kookas in the incidents of Muranda, Amritsar and Raikot. The execution of innocents Suba Giani Singh and Sant Ratan Singh Naiwala had created a lot of resentment. It was Lohri on 11 January and Maghi on 12th. After the fair dispersed on the day of Maghi, the people were going back to their respective places.

The Sikh Gathering at Akal Bunga

Sri Akal Bunga is a shrine at a distance of about 550 feet from Bhaini Sahib dera. Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji used to sit here for meditation. Some Sikhs led by Sardar Hira Singh and Sardar Lehna Singh-both from Sakraudi, Riyasat Patiala-had gathered here to discuss the unfortunate incidents of cow slaughter in Malerkotla and execution of innocents like Giani Singh and Ratan Singh. They decided to attack Malerkotla for the cause of cow protection and justice to Gurmukh Singh. It was decided to take weapons for the same from the Malaud chieftain. Ind Kaur and Khem Kaur-women from Handiaya and Dittupura of Riyasat Malerkotla- were throwing an open challenge to the self-esteemed Sikhs saying, "Gird up your loins you Sikhs to sacrifice your lives for the sake of your faith." A drink was prepared by grinding the

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peel of soap-nuts. Whichever Sikh came forward to join the martyrdom squad was made to drink a saucer full of the soap-nut drink and asked to sit aside.

The Police Inspector's Request

On 13 January 1871AD, Deputy Inspector Police Sar Faraz Khan had reached Bhaini Sahib early in the morning. He requested the satguru to ask his Sikhs to disperse to their homes. The satguru sent Suba Sahib Singh for this purpose to Akal Bunga but the Sikhs did not listen to him. Then Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji himself went there to urge them not to be so obstinate. But Sardar Hira Singh submitted that Guru Tegh Bahadur had ordered them through a glimpse to go to Malerkotla and lay down our lives for the cause of cow-protection. The satguru said that if they could wait for another one year, the rosary would do what they wished to do with sword.

"The saplings are delicate as yet, he said, "but even I can't dare defy Guru Tegh Bahadur's injunction."

Then Hira Singh said,

"O. Master! Nobody knows which one of us is going to return alive to Bhaini Sahib. So we feel like taking food from your holy hands today."

At this, the satguru ordered Suba Lakha Singh to have the food prepared. It was prepared and the Master served it to the men on the war path with his own hands. He was the embodiment of parental love at that time. The zealots had meals and then reached Akal Bunga. By now their number had swelled to 250.

Sardar Hira Singh Draws a Line with his Sword, Asks the Sikhs Ready to Lay Down their Lives to Cross the Line

Sardar Hira Singh came out of the gate of Akal Bunga

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and drew a line on the earth with his sword. Then he roared like a lion,

> "Whosoever is ready to sacrifice his life at the altar of faith should cross over the line."

Meanwhile, some Sikhs perched on the roof shouted from there,

"The ship of Faith is ready to move. Board it whoever wants to cross over to that side." As many as 140 Sikhs out of total 250 crossed the line of demarcation. In the mean time two Sikhs Uttam Singh and Charat Singh belonging to Rurka in district Ludhiana came running in response to the call for boarding the Faith-ship. They were busy in kneading flour in the langar at that time.

Ardas (Prayer) for Dharam Yudh

Now Sardar Hira Singh said prayer to the Almighty for the success in war for the faith i.e. Dharam Yudh. Before departure, Sardar Hira Singh asked the satguru where they should have the first halt.

"*Rabb hi rabb* (God is the only halt)," he said.

The Sikhs took Rabb as Rabbon village due to similarity of pronunciation.

On 13 January 1872AD, the enthusiasts set out for Malerkotla at 2 PM and reached Rabbon at 10 PM. Here they camped at a well on the outskirts of the village. They stayed there till 14 January afternoon. As per government records their number at that time was maximum 125.

Suba Lakha Singh Arrested

Although Deputy Inspector Police Sar Faraz Khan was very much there at the time of the Sikhs' departure and he was eyewitness to the entire event. The satguru had told him frankly that the Sikhs had slipped out of his control. Still, the

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satguru asked Lakha Singh to go to Deputy Commissioner Ludhiana and tell him that the rebellious Sikhs had set out for Malerkotla. He had informed the police officer well in time but made no attempt to stop them. 'Therefore now again it is informed that if the government likes to stop them it was at liberty to do so. As asked by the satguru, Suba Lakha Singh made the Deputy Commissioner Ludhiana familiar with the whole situation. But he was arrested and thrown behind the bars of lock up.

Sar Faraz Khan reached the Deputy Commissioner Ludhiana on 13 January at 8p.m.and submitted his report in black and white beside familiarising him with the situation by word of mouth as well. Rather than making any arrangements to intercept the rebels, the Deputy Commissioner called the lawyers of Nabha, Patiala, Jind and Malerkotla (who were in Ludhiana only) to inform to remain prepared as the Kookas were about to attack them.

The Kooka Rebels Move towards Malaud

Once Sardar Badan Singh of Malaud had reached Bhaini Sahib and requested the satguru for any service he was capable of doing. Sardar Hira Singh sitting close by replied that he would be told when needed. Sardar Hira Singh remembered this and an idea hit upon his mind that before attacking Malerkotla, he would need horses and weapons. All the enthusiasts liked this idea and felt that the sardar of Malaud should be approached for the same. In the afternoon on 14 January, they turned towards Malaud and reached the fort of Malaud in the late afternoon. They reminded the sardar of his promise and explained their objective. The sardar was flustered at this and refused to part with horses and weapons. "Whether you wish or not, we shall not go empty handed from here," Sardar Hira Singh said and they grabbed some

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horses and weapons by force. The servants of the sardar raised an uproar which made the people feel that the dacoits had attacked the village. So they came flocking to face the attackers. So there ensued a clash between the locals and the Sikhs at the fort gate. The Sikhs did not want to harm the villagers but two of the villagers were killed and two others seriously injured by them just in self-defence. They too had two of their men killed and four others grievously injured. The injured ones could not go with them and were arrested then and there only.

Attack on Malerkotla

Malerkotla is just nine miles away from Malaud. The responsible authorities of the Riyasat had got prior information regarding the Kooka program on the night of 14 January. Therefore, they were quite ready to confront them by calling police and military force from the neighbouring riyasats also. The Kooka Sikhs attacked the Chirimar Mohalla of Malerkotla at 7 AM on 15 January. This was the locality with a large population of butchers. Immediately after the forces got information to this effect they zeroed in on the attackers. Their armed strength was nine to ten times that of the kukas. There was no shortage of swords and guns with them. More than weapons, the rebels were armed more with their do-or-die passion. A fierce battle ensued between the two sides. The Sikhs showed their fighting prowess with swords and halberd and gave the enemy very tough resistance. When freed from the battle started taking care of their injured ones, the enemy force attacked them again and forced them to defensive position but when they attacked for the third time the Sikhs made them on the run in such a way that they could not dare attack again. The loss suffered by both the sides was as under:

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Victims	Injured	Killed
Sikhs	2	7
Enemies	4 (serious)	8
	9 (Minor injuries)*	

Those killed on enemy side included that police officer who had got the ox killed before Gurmukh Singh.

When the Sikhs found that there was none to fight against them, they lifted their injured fighters and moved out of Kotla.

Duel between Sardar Hira Singh and Samund Khan Pathan

Samund Khan , a pathan of Malerkotla was known to be very brave. He was away from Kotla at the time of attack. After sometime when he came back and heard about the attack he said to some of his friends,

"Come let me see how brave these Kookas are! He took along some pathan friends and chased the Kookas. The Sikhs were passing from near the Bhootan Wala Theh, 3-4 kilometres from Kotla. Riding astride his horse Samund challenged the Kooka saying,

"Halt, you Singhs! Where are you going? Where is Hira Singh? Let him come forward and face me."

Sardar Hira Singh too was riding his horse. He responded to the pathan's challenge and appeared before Samund Khan saying,

"Pathan! Don't say afterwards I didn't give you the chance. Get ready! Come and attack me first."

Immediately the pathan sprang into action and attacked the sardar on his head. The sardar did not have any shield to

* These figures are according to the report of Dr. Johninson M.D. Civil Surgeon Ludhiana dated 15 January 1872. The 7 injured Kookas were those who were left in the battlefield while 29 injured ones had been removed from there by the Kookas.

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defend himself but he averted the attack with his arm. As a result the head was saved but the wrist was cut off. Immediately thereafter, Hira Singh made such a lethal attack with his sword on the pathan's head that his head was chopped off his torso. It fell apart on the ground like a water melon. The fate of Samund Khan made his associates take to their heels in no time without looking back.

The Singhs Camp in the 'Rar', Arrested

Led by Sardar Hira Singh all the warrior Sikhs reached the boundaries of Patiala riyasat and camped in the village named Rar. Heating oil in a pan, Sardar Hira Singh stopped the profuse bleeding from his stumped arm by almost frying the wound in it. Now the sardar told all the Sikhs that their assigned job was over and there was nothing else for them to do. So it was time to attain martyrdom as early as possible so that no innocents are victimised any longer. Therefore, anybody who wanted to leave could go and those ready to pay the price could stay back. Hearing this some of them slipped away while most of them expressed their wish to attain martyrdom. They numbered 68 now.

After some time, Uttam Singh, the police inspector of Sherpur police station appeared in namdhari attire and very meekly offered langar (food) to them. Sardar Hira Singh could see through his treacherous move but to expedite the process he accepted the offer. The police officer took them home and got them arrested. Niaz Ali, the Deputy Governor of Amargarh (riyasat Patiala) imprisoned all the 68 Sikhs in Sherpur Fort. As per government's report 29 out of these were injured.

The Riyasats Help the Government against the Kookas

The cavalry regiment and artillery of Sikh riyasats of

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Patiala and Jind reached Malerkotla on 17th January. It is confirmed from the telegram dated 17th January from Deputy Commissioner Mr. Cowan which he had sent to the Home Secretary Calcutta. It says:

Transquility restored. About one hundred kookas killed wounded or captured. Patiala, Nabha and Jind, giving active assistence."*

Kookas Vs. Cavalry, Artillery

Cowan, the Deputy Commissioner Ludhiana had reached Kotla on 16 January. He had sent a telegram to the Commissioner Ambala on 15th. i.e. a day earlier that Malerkota attacked by 500 Kukas this morning. Eight or ten killed. Send troops sharp."**

On the orders of Lieutenant Governor Punjab, the Commander-in-Chief dispatched the contingents of cavalry and artillery under the command of General Titler as under:

Gorkha Platoon- 1st.

A part of Regiment No. 72 and one artillery contingent from Delhi and 12 Bengal Cavalry were meant for Malerkotla only. It was apprehended that the Kookas may try to capture the Ludhiana Fort. Therefore, 3 companies of Infantry-54 half a battery of Royal Artillery were sent from Jalandhar.***

Special Assistance from Maharaja Patiala

Maharaja Mahinder Singh was so deadly against the Kookas that he was always ready to help the government against them by all means. This becomes evident from his telegram which he had sent to the Secretary, Punjab Government on 17 January 1872AD. It says:

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* Kooka Outbreak, p. 7

** Ibid.

*** Ibid. p. 9

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My orders- 200 camels, 20 elephants ordered to be sent to Khanna immediately. Naib Nazim (Deputy Governor) Bassi ordered to send as many camels and vehicles as needed without delay. The Nabha ruler has been informed about the whole affair*.

Singhs Brought to Malerkotla

On 17 January, Niaz Ali, the Naib Nazim reached Malerkotla with the arrested Kooka brave hearts. The assistance from the princely states was there in the form of troops of cavalry and artillery. Military assistance was expected from Jalandhar, Delhi and Ambala also.

The Singhs Blown with Cannons

On 17 January these Kooka gallants were taken to the 'rakkar' (barren ground) which till date is known as "Kookeyan da Rakkar".

On one side, the Kookas were lined up and on the other the uniformed and well-armed officers and sepoys of forces stood quite ready to carry out the orders. On one side, 7 cannons were pitched on the orders of Cowan. Cowan decided to blow the Kookas with cannons without prosecuting them or giving them any chance of defence even though it was not within his competency. The Commissioner Ambala, his senior had written to him asking Cowan not to kill Kookas before his arrival on the scene. But Cowan cared a fig for his directive and got ready to execute his own order. On the other hand the Kookas smiled at the sight of cannons. The onlookers present there were astonished to see how the Kookas had become accustomed to take death so lightly. Cowan and his wife sat there in their respective chairs. The

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* A government report says that the Maharajas of Patiala, Jind and Nabha had sent 9 cannons to blow the rebels-Kuka File Central.

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government record also says that the Kookas were blown after tying them to the cannon muzzles but this is far from being true. As per Mai Ind Kaur and Mai Khem Kaur who were eye witness to the attack as well as arrest have refuted the falsehood that the Kookas were tied to the cannon muzzles. As per both these women there was no need for the same as the Kookas had refused to be tied like this and jostled with each other to stand before the cannon. They were ordered to stand with their backs against the cannon muzzle but they disobeyed this order saying that the brave are more pleased to face death rather than turning their back on it like cowards.

This was a strange but unique spectacle to see the brave hearts anxious to embrace death for removing the butcher's dagger from the neck of cows and chains of British slavery from the feet of Mother India.

The Fire Orders

Cowan ordered 7 Kookas to come before the cannon. This group included Sardar Hira Singh and Sardar Lehna Singh also. The cannon man ignited the wick thrice but missed. Then Sardar Hira Singh smiled and said,

"Mr. Cowan it was only a test of your law. Now the Master has given green signal. Ignite the cannon wick now. The cannon man ignited the fuse wick and the bodies of rebels were blown to bits in the air. The Kookas then kept coming before the engine of death while raising slogans of victory and singing,

"Billya der na la oi, mera saath jaanda aey"

(Don't make any delay O cat-eyed monster! Otherwise, I will be left behind my comrades.)

49 Kooka Sikhs had been already martyred. Now came

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the turn of Bishan Singh (12) son of Mai Khem Kaur of village Rar.

Unique Martyrdom

Looking at his innocent face, Cowan's wife said,

"My dear! Please spare him."

"Yes, this is possible provided he says that he is not a follower of Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji." Cowan replied.

No sooner did he utter these words than the boy Bishan Singh sprang into action with the agility of a panther and pounced on the officer. He caught hold of Cowan from his beard* and knocking him down on the ground said,

"You, the cat-eyed devil! Will you say again that Bishan Singh is not the follower of Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji ?"

The boy's grip on the Englishman's beard was so hard that it did not loosen unless he was hacked to pieces with swords by the security guards standing nearby. Mai Ind Kaur and Khem Kaur also entreated before the officer to blow them also so that they too could join the list of martyrs but Cowan handed them over to the forces of Patiala. They were freed after taking them within the boundaries of Patiala riyasat.

Cowan writes in one of his letters written to the Commissioner Ambala:

> "The two women were the residents of Patiala State and I made them over to the Officer Commanding the Patiala tropps for conveyance to Patiala. 49 of the rebels were blownn away from the guns this afternoon noun on the parade ground of the Kotla cheif in the presence of the troops of Patiala, Nabha, Jind and Kotla states. It was my intention to have had 50 men blown away and to have sent remaining

* Cowan was a priest. So he had beard.

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> 16 rebels to Malodh to be executed there tomorrow but one man escaped from the guards made a furious attack on me seizing me by the beard and endeavouring to strange me and he was a very powerful man, I had considerable difficulty in releasing myself. He then made a most savage attack on some officers of Native States who were standing near me. These officers drew their swords and cut him down."*

Forsyth's letter to Cowan

It is worth mention here that when Cowan was blowing the singhs with cannons and the last seventh group was being brought before the muzzle, he received a letter from Forsyth, the Commissioner. It said that he was visiting the site personally and directed him not to kill anyone before his arrival." He simply read the Commissioner's letter and slipped it in his pocket. Caring little about the letter of his senior he continued his action** and killed seven the remaining group of Kooka rebels whose life could be spared with obedience to the directive.***

When Forsyth came to know that Cowan had disregarded his orders brazenly he still justified his action under the impression that their mutual differences might make the Indians take advantage of the situation. Forsyth writes himself in this regard:

"I sent him written orders from Ludhiana to prosecute the rebels and not to kill anybody till I reached there. But

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* Kuka Outbreak, p. 29

** Ibid.

*** Maybe he got this letter earlier but to avoid his cumbersome liability Cowan wrote that he got it when only the last group remained to be killed.

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Cowan took law into his hands and pocketing my letter refused to comply with my orders and killed the rebels.*

I found myself in an embarrassing situation as I saw this. Vis-à-vis the volatility of the situation I thought that rejecting his action would leave an impression of mutual differences in the British bureaucracy which could be taken advantage of by the natives . Therefore I took his action on myself and in a letter ratified his action."**

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* Forsyth's autobiography, Chapter 3.

** It shows that none was blown with cannon shell before the receipt of this letter.

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Chapter-23

Satguru Ram Singh Exiled

Colonel Bailey departed from Ludhiana to arrest Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji the orders of the Commissioner. But as he reached Sahnewal he came to know that Deputy Inspector Gulab Singh has already left for Bhaini Sahib with his force as per an official order. Therefore Bailey halted at Sahnewal in waiting for him. Gulab Singh sent Satgur Ram Singh the word that the government had summoned him to Ludhiana.

"The hour we waited for has come at last," said the satguru. He wrapped the light-weight black blanket gifted to him by Mai Karmo on his person like a baldric. As she gifted it to him, Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji had said at once,

"Karmo has come with the gift for my going on exile."

He wrapped a black woollen cloth around his head also.

"Master! Which mare should be harnessed for you- Cheeni, Chambi or Surkhi?" The devotee Sikhs asked.

"Let them remain tethered in the stable now. Prepare bullock-cart for me today," he said.

Father's Emotional Outburst

The bullock cart was ready for move on the road. Draped in black, the Master was riding in it. What kind of ominous moment that must be for the devotees to see Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji who ignited the flame of independence not only in Punjab but all over India, leaving his motherland

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forever. He knew this already that the consequence of this mega task would not be just ordinary. But he was aware of this fact also that although he would have to pay heavily for this venture but it will not only rejuvenate Sikhism but trigger a wave of freedom struggle in the whole of India. The devotees were awe-struck at the sight of their Master leaving them forever in the bullock-cart. There will be no exaggeration in analogising this scene with the one on Lord Rama's exile to the forests. The only difference between the two was that Rama was supposed to be away for a specific period of fourteen years while the periodicity of the satguru's exile was uncertain.

The tears gushed out of the eyes of devotees witnessing the scene of their Master's departure. The condition of Baba Jassa Singh, his father was very pathetic. Looking at the bullock-cart he said in a very touching tone,

"Maharaj! You had played this very prank with me in Treta era also". Saying this, his throat was choked with emotion. Tears streamed down his cheeks and disappeared into his beard.

Preaching to Satguru Hari Singh Ji

The younger brother of Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji was Maharaj Budh Singh. Later, he came to be known as Satguru Hari Singh. He was greatly attached to the feet of his elder brother.

Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji said to his younger brother,

> "Don't be sad Bhai Budh Singh ji. This is as per the will of God. One has to pay for everything. Now I am geared up to pay for something without which India and my beloved Punjab are reeling in chains of slavery. The spirit to break asunder these chains has been infused in our countrymen. I have lighted a torch

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which cannot be extinguished now. I will welcome all the suffering in the service of my motherland. The singhs have been blasted with cannons and hanged, you know. I don't know what is in store for us ahead. I am leaving now. The panth may have to undergo tough ordeals after me but you have to keep up your fortitude and keep the followers engaged in the service of motherland and panth."

The teary-eyed Satguru Hari Singh implored saying,

"Patshah! You remain here and order me to go with them."

"Budh Singh ji, this is only for me to go," the satguru said. Hearing this Satguru Hari Singh bowed his head before the Master with great reverence and said,

"Patshah! Always keep your hand of blessing on my head and make me do what you will."

In the mean time, the devotees were entreating before him not to go.

"Just have pity on us. Please don't go, O Lord! What shall we do in your absence?" They said. Raising his arm skywards he raised the slogan, *"Bole so nihal, Sat Sri Akaal"* and solaced them."

Departure from Bhaini Sahib

Bhai Gurditt Singh, the cart-driver was asked to move the vehicle ahead. The bullocks started moving merrily at a steady pace little knowing that this was the last ride of the apostle who used to caress their back so lovingly. Who knows when he would be back now after exile unlike Rama whose exile was fixed. A strong police force and Gorkha Regiment was lined near Laaton on the main road*. The satguru reached

* A small hamlet situated on Samrala Ludhiana road. It is about one mile away from Bhaini Sahib.

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Ludhiana in the thick of night under the security umbrella of this force.

Forsyth's own Statement on Arrest

Fortsyth, the Commissioner had made up his mind to arrest Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji at the very time of his departure for Ludhiana from Delhi. He writes in his hand-written autobiography,

> "I sought clear orders for the arrest of the Kooka leader (Satguru) Ram Singh from the governor but failed. Therefore, I was forced to move even without permission. I very well remember my last words to him, "Okay then, I will act according to my own decision and you will have to help me.*

Thereafter, describing the barbarous punitive action against kukas in Malerkotla, he writes,

"The next step of mine was to arrest (Satguru) Ram Singh. It had to be done with great alertness. I called him at night to my place and ordered that a special train be kept ready. I had kept a contingent on guard hidden outside. Immediately as the Kooka leader reached Ludhiana I handed him over to the guard and sent him to Delhi. I wired what I had done to the governor and he confirmed the action.**

In the Prayag Fort

On 18 January 1872AD Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji was made to board along with his personal attendant Naanu Singh, Suba Lakha Singh, Suba Jawahar Singh and Suba Sahib Singh, a special train under the supervision of 12 Gorkha Guard and Mr. Jackson. He was taken to Allahabad and placed under house-arrest in Prayag Fort.

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* Autobiography Sir Douglas Forsyth, Ch. 3

** Ibid.

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After sending Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji off to Allahabad, Forsyth ordered Col. Bailey to go to Bhaini Sahib. Bailey reached Bhaini Sahib 18 January early in the morning with 40 Gorkha riders. The six subas named Kahan Singh, Brahma Singh, Pahara Singh, Hukma Singh, Sujan Singh and Gopal Singh were arrested and sent to Ludhiana. The first four of these were made to board the second special train and sent to Allahabad. As per Bailey's report about 150 Kooka Sikhs from all over India had gathered there. A majority of them were Bihangams- i.e. the Sikhs with no particular place of residence but completely dedicated to the guru. There were a number of women also who served the guru's abode doing a variety of chores like spinning etc. Bailey himself writes,

> ""We obliged all to clear out, and assembled them on the road beyond the village. Thinking it undesirable that they should remain in the neighbourhood or disperse throughout the country I had all marched into Ludhiana, with recommendation that such as had come from independent states should be made over to the vakils thereof and that the others should be departed to their homes."*

Search of Dera

Col. Bailey writes in his report, on 20th January, 1872AD.

"I then proceeded to search (satguru) Ram Singh's premises for arms and papers in the presence of Lambardars from three adjacent villages. The only weapons found were 36 axes, 5 Gandassas, several quoits, a large number of clubs and to khukrees....... No papers of importance were found, and no account books of any reliability.......The search which occupied two days.....I found in various places cash about

* Kuka Outbreak Report of Col. Bailey 20-1-1872.

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Rs. 1500 and ornaments, gold and silver, to a considerable value. I deemed it advisable to collect the whole in one strong box........together with more valuable shawls and embroidered chogas and despatched the whole for deposit in the treasury."

Locked Houses

"I then secured the premises under lock and key and placed in charge a police guard of twenty constables under Deputy Inspector Amroa Ali Shah. All hangers-on of the establishment, I required to depart except sufficient men to look after the live-stock, which consists of 82 heads of horses, camels and horned cattle. I also permitted to remain three males and two female servants for attending to the wants of:

1. Jassa Singh, father of (Satguru) Ram Singh, age nearly 90 years.
2. Budh Singh (Satguru Hari Singh) brother of (Satguru) Ram Singh aged about 50 years.
3. Mussamut (Bibi) Nandan, daughter of (Satguru) Ram Singh, with three sons (children)....

I also left wariam Singh, the manager of the shop kept by (satguru) Ram Singh on his premises and one Makhan Singh, the Guru's body servant."

Report on 2 Lakh Rupees and Weapons

In the last paragraph of his report, Col. Bailtic writes,

"The Lambardar informed, that the treasure of atleast two lakhs were believed to be buried about the place; they thought probable that the arms had been similarly secreted, though search however could not be conducted without first clearing out the large stores of grain, bhusa and fodder collected indifferent spots, which were, I did not undertake."*

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* Kuka Papers, p. 185-189

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Temples Search Again.....

It has been mentioned earlier that when Col. Bailey had sent everything recovered from there to Ludhiana he was told about 2 lakh rupees and a stock of weapons buried there somewhere. Bailey did not try to recover the buried booty but made a mention of it in his report. But how could the government ignore this report. Cowan was ordered telegraphically to make a thorough search of (Satguru) Ram Singh's house immediately and recover the buried treasure and weapons about which D.I.G. Lahore Circle Col. Bailey had shown uncalled for apathy. Here is the text of that telegram:

"Delhi 22 January 1872-

For- Deputy Commissioner Ludhiana

"Recover the treasure and weapons hinted at by the people and ignored by Col. Bailey by making a thorough search of (Satguru) Ram Singh's house immediately.*

Complying with the government's orders, Cowan deputed Mr. Jackson, Assistant Superintendant who reached Bhaini Sahib and destroyed all the houses up to Pani Handa. But since he got nothing**, he writes,

On receipt of the telegram, copy of which accompanies, I deputed Mr. Jackson, Adjutant, Superintendant of Police to make a thorough search of (satguru) Ram Singh's premises at Bhaini (sahib) for arms and treasure. Mr. Jackson has returned and reports that he was made a complete search, digging up the grounds to a considerable depth wherever he thought it likely that arms or treasure might be buried, but that no trace of either has been found."

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* Kuka Papers, p. 189

** Cowan's office note No.26, dated 29 January 1872. Cowan had sent this note along with his report to Commissioner Ambala.

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Government's Orders about the Satguru's Belongings

As regards the belongings of Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji which Col. Bailey had taken away from Bhaini Sahib to Ludhiana, Cowan wrote to the Magistrate Allahabad and queried whom should these things be handed over? In response the Secretary Punjab Government said that these valuables should not be handed over to anybody without the government's permission.*

The Remaining 16 Kukas also Blown with Cannons

How shameful conspiracy of the British government, the officer who sent instruction to Cowan not to give death penalty to anyone before he came. But after reaching Malerkotla next day, he blew away the remaining 16 Kukas. After moving Satguru towards prayag, Mr Forsyth alongwith Col. Gulf...... reached Kotla with a contingent on 18 January 1872.

Mr. Cowan had proposed death sentence for 16 Kookas after preparing their case in the presence of Malerkotla's Nazim and Tehsildar. Forsyth confirmed it immediately as he reached Malerkotla and blew to bits even the remaining 16 Kukas in the presence of the European rulers of the riyasat."**

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* Kuka Papers.

* As regards these 16 martyrs, it is believed that they were executed but the government's record vouches for the fact that they were also blown away with cannon shots. It is corroborated from the letter of C.M. Riwaz, the Punjab Government Secretary. By this letter No.77, dated 14/2/1872 he had asked Forsyth whether these 16 had been executed or killed with cannon fire. The answer given was: cannon fire. (Kuka Papers, P.332). It becomes evident also from the martyrdom of Sant Waryam Singh of Merhaj, a close relative of Maharaja Patiala and a short-statured young man. Recommendation in his favour reached exactly when he was made to stand before the cannon muzzle. ----->

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Forsyth Gives Away Prizes

After blowing away the Kooka rebels Forsyth held a darbar in which on the recommendations of Cowan he gave away prizes to those who had assisted him in this game of gore against about 100 patriots.

Prizes were distributed from Malerkotla treasury:

Name (s) of the Awardee	Amount
Niaz Ali, Naib Nazim Patiala	Rs. 1000
Punjab Singh (a courtier)	Rs. 300
Jaimal Singh (informer)	Rs. 200
Mastan Ali	Rs.100
Uttam Singh (The thanedar in namdhari dress who trapped the Sikhs in the police net)	Rs.50
Ratan Singh	Rs.50
Gulab Singh	Rs.50
Partap Singh	Rs.50

Gratefulness towards the Kings of Princely States

Hereafter, Forsyth wrote letters of gratefulness to the kings of Patiala, Nabha and Jind (the princely states). These letters were sent through their lawyers who were a part of the wicked council of Kotla.*

Cowan sought Punjab government's permission for

<---Cowan said to the gunner, "Leave him. The gunner said that the boy was too short to come up to the muzzle. Hearing this, Waryam Singh collected some sodes of earth from there and made with them a base to stand on and say bravely, "Now why don't you fire me? See, I am quite before the muzzle." An irritated Cowan ordered fire and sent him to the realm of other martyrs. So Waryam Singh's name figures in the list of Sikhs killed on 18th. It shows that these 16 were also blown away.

* Kuka Outbreak, pp. 39-40.

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administering death sentence to the 4 Sikhs captured from Malaud but the government refused. Forsyth reached Malaud on 18th. and sentenced all the four to exile in 'Kalepani'. This is worth mention here that Forsyth had received a telegram from Punjab government which directed him not to deliver death sentence to anybody without the prior permission of the government.

But Forsyth writes in his report dated 20 January 1872:

While writing this report I have received a telegram directing me to stop execution of death sentence without the clear cut permission of the Lt. governor. I mention here what I have already done. By the time I reached Kotla there were thirty people out of whom 16 were prosecuted in the court and going by my authority as Commissioner I sentenced them to death. From the remaining 14, four have been sentenced to lifelong imprisonment. The other ten have not been given any punishment.

The List of Martyred Sikhs

Name (S)	**Village**
(1) S. Hira Singh (Leader)	Sakraudi (Riyasat Patiala)
(2) Lehna Singh (Leader)	-----do-----
(3) Mitt Singh	-----do-----
(4) Kataar Singh	Dhanaula (Riyasat Patiala)
(5) Parsa Singh	Guru Sar (R. Patiala)
(6) Dhyan Singh	Bhaddal Thuha (R. Patiala)
(7) Ratan Singh	-----do-----
(8) Bhoop Singh	Dyalgarh (R. Patiala)
(9) Atar Singh	-----do-----
(10) Harnam Singh	Gill (R. Patiala)
(11) Gujjar Singh	Haripur (R. Patiala)
(12) Nand Singh	Handiaya (R. Patiala)

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(13)	Sadda Singh	-----do-----
(14)	Kala Singh	Dyalpur (R. Kotla)
(15)	Sant Waryam Singh	Mamm
(16)	Sant Bir Singh	Mamm
(17)	Narayan Singh	Rangian
(18)	Natha Singh	Barnala (R. Patiala)
(19)	Waryam Singh	-----do-----
(20)	Ratan Singh	-----do-----
(21)	Harnam Singh	Dhamot (R. Patiala)
(22)	Sada Singh	Rar (R. Patiala)
(23)	Narayan Singh	-----do-----
(24)	Atar Singh	-----do-----
(25)	Bishan Singh	-----do-----
(26)	Hira Singh	-----do-----
(27)	Harnam Singh	-----do-----
(28)	Jaimal Singh	-----do-----
(29)	Gurditt Singh	-----do-----
(30)	Sher Singh	Deeva
(31)	Gurmukh Singh Nambardar	Farwahi (R. Malerkotla)
(32)	Sant Bhoop Singh	-----do-----
(33)	Sant Kharag Singh	-----do-----
(34)	Sant Narayan Singh Chung	-----do-----
(35)	Sant Dhyan Singh	Chakk Kukyan (R. Kotla)
(36)	Sant Atar Singh	Walian (R. Sangrur)
(37)	Sant Fateh Singh	-----do-----
(38)	Sant Fateh Singh	Kharagpur (R. Sangrur)
(39)	Sant Prem Singh	-----do-----
(40)	Sant Harnam Singh	Mandi

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(41)	Sant Maagha Singh	Merhaaj (Distt. Ferozepur)
(42)	Sant Atar Singh	-----do-----
(43)	Sant Jodh Singh	-----do-----
(44)	Sant Nidhan Singh (Sadiq)	-----do-----
(45)	Sant Harnam Singh	-----do-----
(46)	Sant Jagat Singh (Ganji)	-----do-----
(47)	Sant Uttam Singh	Rurka (District Ludhiana)
(48)	Sant Charhat Singh	-----do-----
(49)	Sant Suhel Singh	Lehra
(50)	Sant Deva Singh	Lohgarh
(51)	Sant Maha Singh	Chao
(52)	Sant Hazara Singh	Chao
(53)	Sant Bir Singh	Chao
(54)	Sant Prem Singh	Pir Da Kot
(55)	Sant Kahan Singh	Sangowal
(56)	Sant Jeewan Singh	Ballon
(57)	Sant Meehan Singh	Latala
(58)	Sant Gurmukh Singh	-----do-----
(59)	Sant Natha Singh	Rabbon
(60)	Sant Wazir Singh	-------do------

Martyrs up to 18 January 1872AD

(1)	Sant Albel Singh	Walian (Riyasat Patiala)
(2)	Sant Roor Singh	Majra
(3)	Sant Kesar Singh	Gillan (R. Nabha)
(4)	Sant Seda Singh	Rabbon (District Ludhiana)
(5)	Sant Anoop Singh	Sakraudi (Distt. Ludhiana)
(6)	Sant Sobha Singh	Rabbon (Distt. Ludhiana)
(7)	Sant Narayan Singh	Chhanna Bahadar Singh (District Ludhiana)

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(8)	Sant Sham Singh	Joga (R. Patiala)
(9)	Sant Hira Singh	Pitho ki (R. Nabha)
(10)	Sant Bhagat Singh	Kanjla (R. Patiala)
(11)	Sant Hakam Singh	Chubhal (Distt. Amritsar)
(12)	Sant Waryam Singh	Marhaj (Distt. Ferozepur)
(13)	Sant Sobha Singh	Baddal (R. Nabha)
(14)	Sant Sujan Singh	Rabbon (Distt. Ludhiana)
(15)	Sant Bela Singh	-----do-----
(16)	Sant Jawahar Singh	Walian (R. Patiala)

80 Martyrs

14 January Martyred at Malaud	2
Killed during Kotla battle on 15 Jan.	7
A Sikh almost killed in Kotla battle. He passed away later.	1
Blown with cannons in Malerkotla on 17 Jan.	49
Killed with sword on 17 Jan.	1
Blown with cannons on 18 Jan.	16
The injured sent to Kalepani but never to return	4
Total	80

The following are the names of four injured persons who were exiled for life to Kalepani:

1. Bhagwan Singh s/o Ram Singh r/o Nangal, Riyasat Patiala.

2. Gian Singh s/o Dulla Singh r/o Phuleri.

3. Thaman Singh s/o Albel Singh. He was chacha-uncle to Sr. no. 2 i.e. Gian Singh.

4. Mehar Singh s/o Gulab Singh Kuka, r/o Alawalpur, District Jalandhar. (Kuka Outbreak, P.66).

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List of Namdhari Martyred in Malerkotla as received from Patiala

Here is the list of namdharis made cannon fodder in Malerkotla.*

Name of the Martyr	Father's Name	Address
1. Hira Singh	Kahan Singh Sakraudi	(Bhawanigarh)
2. Lehna Singh	Mehtab Singh	----do----
3. Sibi Singh	Ganda Singh	Bhaddal Thuha, Police Station (P.S) Amloh, Riyasat Nabha
4. Kahan Singh	Rakkar Singh	Lehra, P. S. Dehlon (Ludhiana)
5. Deva Singh	Haqoomat Singh	Lohgarh, P.S. Dehlon, (Ludhiana)
6. Narayan Singh	Mehtab Singh	Rar, Tehsil Sherpur
7. Joga Singh	Sahib Singh	Mehraj, P.S. Nathana, Tehsil Moga (Ferozepur)
8. Waryam Singh	Amrik Singh	----do----
9. Atar Singh	Bhag Singh	----do----
10. Gurmukh Singh	Khazan Singh	Farwahi, Riyasat Kotla
11. Bhoop Singh	Khazan Singh	----do----
12. Khazan Singh	Wazir Singh	Jaloke, R. Faridkot
13. Harnam Singh	Nagahia Singh	P.S. Bhadaur, Tehsil Anhadgarh (Barnala)
14. Sardarni Indan	w/o Nand Singh	Handiaya, P.S. Tehsil Anhadgarh
15. Kahan Singh	Dalla Singh	Lehra, P.S. Sunam
16. Natha Singh	Budh Singh	Barnala, R. Patiala
17. Sadda Singh	Mehtab Singh	Rar, P.S. Tehsil Sherpur
18. Waryam Singh	Makhan Singh	Barnala, Tehsil Anhadgarh

* It was obtained recently from Patiala Archives by Prof. Malwinderjit Singh Waraich and Suba Surinder Kaur Kharal. Translator october 2023

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19. Sujan Singh	Sooja Singh	Rurki P.S. Dehlon (Ludhiana)
20. Uttam Singh	Mehar Singh	Rurka P.S. Dehlon (Ludhiana)
21. Atar Singh	Desa Singh	Majrai P.S. Tehsil Amloh, R. Nabha
22 Jawahar Singh	Desa Singh	----do----
23. Basant Singh	Sujan Singh	Said Barahan
24. Nihal Singh	Boota Singh	Lehra P.S. Dehlon (Ludhiana)
25. Gulab Singh	Jamiat Singh	Misranwala (Amritsar)
26. Bela Singh	Ram Singh	Rabbon, P.S. Dehlon (Ludhiana)
27. Mitt Singh	Budh Singh	Sakraudi, P.S. Tehsil, Bhawanigarh
28. Jawahar Singh	Udham Singh	Balian, P.S. Tehsil Sherpur
29. Khazan Singh	Bhagwan Singh	Pir Ke Kot, Tehsil Rajisar
30. Sadda Singh	Daya Singh	Rabbon, P.S. Dehlon (Ludhiana)
31. Sobha Singh	Daya Singh	------do------
32. Wazir Singh	Bara Singh	------do--------
33. Gurmukh Singh	Bahale Singh	Latala, P.S. Dehlon (Ludhiana)
34. Bir Singh	Bhagat Singh	P.S. & Tehsil Bhawanigarh.
35. Roop Singh	Kesar Singh	Dyalgarh, P.S. Tehsil Bhawanigarh
36. Basawa Singh	Saunda Singh	----do----
37. Harnam Singh	Lehna Singh	----do----
38. Anoop Singh	Mehtab Singh	Sakraudi, P.S. Tehsil Bhawanigarh
39. Roop Singh	Noora Singh	Deva, P.S. Tehsil Sahibgarh (Payal)
40. Ratan Singh	Jassa Singh	Gummti, P.S. Tehsil Sherpur
41. Gurditt Singh	Rabbi Singh	Rar, P.S. Tehsil Sherpur
42. Bishan Singh	Mehtab Singh	----do----

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43. Dasaundha Singh	Bir Singh	Balasaur, P.S. Khumano
44. Waryam Singh	Jassa Singh	Khanauri, Tehsil Sherpur
45. Waryam Singh	Bahia Singh	District Ambala
46. Sardarni Khemo	Gurditt Singh	
47. Prem Singh	Pal Singh	Gaggarpur, P.S. Tehsil Sangrur, Reasyat Jind
48. Kahan Singh	Not clear	P.S. Tehsil Sahibgarh
49. Harnam Singh	Dalip Singh	Mandi, P.S. Naianwala
50. Albel Singh	Sujan Singh	Balian, P.S. Tehsil Sherpur
51. Sadda Singh	Maha Singh	Rar, P.S. Sherpur
52. Harnam Singh	Charhat Singh	----do----
53. Bakhsha Singh	Not clear	Arora, District Sirsa
54. Charhat Singh	Dahria	Balian, P.S. Tehsil Sherpur
55. Roor Singh	Buta Singh	Mallu Majarian P.S. Sherpur
56. Kesar Singh	Dhyan Singh	Gillan, P.S. Reasyat Nabha
57. Charhat Singh	Maagh Singh	Rurka, P.S. Dehlon District Ludhiana
58. Bhagat Singh	Dyal Singh	Kanjhla, P.S. Tehsil Sherpur
59. Jeewan Singh	Dhaunkal Singh	Phul, P.S. Sunam
60. Sobha Singh	Khazan Singh	Bhaddal Thuha, P.S. Amloh, Nabha
61. Sham Singh	Mehar Singh	Joga, Tehsil Bhikhi
62. Sadda Singh	Roopa Singh	----do----
63. Maha Singh	Mangal Singh	Saadak, P.S. Malaud P.S. Kot
64. Charhat Singh	Ram Singh	Balian P.S. Tehsil Sherpur
65. Roor Singh	Jassa Singh	Bishanpura, P.S. Reasyat Nabha
66. Sadda Singh	Bir Singh	not clear, P.S. Tehsil Sherpur
67. Jabar Singh	Gulab Singh	Gummti P.S. Tehsil Sherpur
68. Kataar Singh	Not clear	Dhaula, Riasyat Nabha

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Chapter- 24

Persecution of Namdharis by the Maharaja Patiala

On 18 January 1872AD early in the morning, Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji was made to leave for Allahabad by special train. On 19 January Maharaja Mohinder Singh Patiala let loose a reign of terror on the namdharis of the riyasat by issuing an order. Here is the text of that order which he sent to the Secretary of Punjab Government in his own handwriting on 20th January 1872AD:

Maharaja edict

*Be it known that 68 of the insurgents of the Kuka sect who attacked the towns of Maloudh, in the Ludhiana district, and Kotla of Afgans on the 14th of January 1872, were apprehended through the energy of Syad Niaz Ali, Naib Nazim of Amargarh, and were blown from the cannon mouth at Kotla, by order of the Deputy Commissioner of Ludhiana. It is believed that all those who took part in the outbreak have now been punished, but for an advisable and necessary precaution all those subjects of the state, who went to Bhaini to Ram Singh, the leader of the above-mentioned sect, on the occasion of the Lohri Festival previous to the recent outbreak must be arrested and confined till such time as they prove to the satisfaction of the Court that they did not participate in

* Kuka Papers, p. 353.

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the disturbances. Arrangements mast also be made that the members of this sect may not be allowed to assemble in an unlawful manner anywhere, therefore, to act in accordance with the intention of HAZUR (The Maharaja, Sardar DEVA SINGH, Chief Judge), be addressed to issue orders to the Nazims of the districts to arrest all the Kukas in the state, who went to Ram Singh, leader of the sect on the occasion of the festival at Bhaini, and keep them in confinement till they satisfy the Court of their non-participation in the disturbance; and in such villages in which the Kukas reside they be placed in the custody of the Lambardars till further orders, with distinct injunctions that the lambardars will be held answerable if they are allowed to leave their villages, and the police be strictly directed not to allow the Kukas to assemble in any place, and if they find them in company, they should at once arrest them and forward them to the Court to be punished according to law. But care must be taken that the people of the sect be not subjected to unwarranted oppression, it is not the intention of the SARKAR (Patiala state), to subject them to any undue oppression, if they live in good conduct, but the intention only is this that they may not be allowed to disturb the peace or safety of the people. So all the Faujdari and Civil officers should understand the spirit of this order, and act accordingly.

The Nazims be also ordered to confiscate property of every description of all subjects of the state belonging to those who attacked Malodh and Kotla, and explain the contents of the above (mansha) intention of the resolution of the Sarkar, to the people of the Kuka sect through the Naib Nazims and Thanedars and if they consider it advisable, to do this themselves. The men, who belong to this sect should also he arrested for the present. A copy of this memorandum be sent to the Munshikhana for the information of political officers,

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and another to the office of the Patiala Akhbar for publication in the newspaper."

The Subas under House-Arrest in Pryag Fort

The following subas were placed under house-arrest in the Pryag Fort along with Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji and his personal servant Nanu Singh:

> 1. Suba Sahib Singh, 2. Roor Singh, 3. Suba Lakha Singh, 4. Suba Kahan Singh, 5. Suba Jawahar Singh, 6. Suba Brahma Singh, 7. Suba Malook Singh, 8. Suba Maan Singh, 9. Suba Hukma Singh, 10. Suba Pahara Singh, 11. Sardar Mangal Singh* Bishanpura (Kuka Outbreak, p.9).

The Arrests Precede Warrants

A perusal of official record reveals the extent to which the system had stooped in respect of dealing with namdharis. Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji and his subas were arrested from 17 to 22nd January 1872AD and warrants were issued on 22nd February. (Ref. the telegram of Secretary to Government of India sent to the Governor Punjab on 22 February 1872AD. It says,

"Warrants against (Satguru) Ram Singh and followers sent by post to Allahabad."**

It has already been mentioned that Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji and his followers were arrested without any court warrants and placed under house-arrest in Pryag Fort (U.P.)

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* Mangal Singh was arrested by Maharaja Patiala without the government's orders. First, he was imprisoned in Bahadurgarh Fort and then handed over to Punjab government which put him also under house-arrest along with others in Prayag Fort.(Maharaja Mahinder Singh's letter which he wrote to the Secretary, Punjab Government on 20/1/1872. Kooka Papers, p.353.

** Kuka Outbreak, p.11

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and requisite warrants were issued one month later. As regards legal procedure, the government was supposed o prosecute them in the open and prove them guilty. In that case it could look justified to some extent but it did nothing of this sort and took resort to Bengal Regulation-3 (1818) because the government had nothing substantial for initiating against him. The following evidences are noticeable for ratifying this fact:

1. Mr. Hutchinson writes to Mr. Bailey, the Secretary, Government of India that it is difficult to produce any such evidence that may form a basis to punish him in the court. His popularity as religious leader is enough to keep him immune to any allegation.
2. A letter No. 364 S dated 30/9/1872AD written by the Secretary to Punjab Government to the Secretary Government of India H.I. Dampier says: Punjab Governor sought the opinion of Deputy Commissioners of Sialkot, Ferozepur, Gujjranwala and Ludhiana whether the Kooka leaders undergoing house-arrest should be prosecuted publicly or not. All the four DCs. Opined in response as under:

(A) **R.W. Trafford, Deputy Commissioner Sialkot:** In my opinion it is not advisable to bring the Kooka leaders in the court openly at Allahabad. If they are allowed to rest at peace and an eye is kept simultaneously on the peacefully living Kookas, this movement, I presume, will die its own death very shortly. The people will forget it.

(B) **Mr. Burney, the Deputy Commissioner Ferozepur (23/9/1872AD):** The Kookas seem to me very befuddled at present. But rather than thinking that we shall be able to manage satisfactory evidences

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against them in Allahabad, it would be better to crush them with an iron hand so that this sect is eliminated once and for all 23rs September, 1872AD.

(C) **Major F.G. Miller, Deputy Commisioner Gujjranwala:** I doubt whether my statements collected by me about the conduct of Kookas from 26-30 April and 22 May will be able to work in the open court.

I understand that producing the Kookas in the open court in Allahabad will be worthwhile only if the government feels that it will yield the desirable results. What I feel is that in case the prosecution concludes in their release, it will create an unpalatable impact. In this regard, I am of the opinion that despite the government's fulsome denunciation of the Kookas' activities the old timer Sikhs are still empathetic towards him and they tend to support him.

(D) **Mr. Biden C., Deputy Commissioner Ludhiana:** The statements taken by me will certainly stand the test in the open court. (2) If the evidence against the Kookas is deemed satisfactory enough to keep up the crime mentioned in the suit and form a case sufficient for exile, then, I think, it will be in the fitness of things to bring them in open court. In case it does not work well, it would be proper to exile them on political grounds. Ever since the house arrest of (Satguru) Ram Singh and his devotee subas, we have been having a sense of relief. Therefore, in no conditions should we make the blunder of letting the smouldering fire of this movement turn into conflagration. I personally feel that waiting for a suitable leader will have its swan's song within another ten years or so. (22/9/1872, Central File, P.107)

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The Governor's Opinion

As regards the above, Mr. James Macnabb, the Governor of Punjab writes to the Secretary, Government of India as under:

"In most of the cases, the witnesses of Police officers, village heads and those who are not concerned with the Kooka sect will be able to stand out in the court as they have no sympathies with them. But a law suit held at a far off place long after the issuance of earlier statements will give way to the difference in the witnesses' version and thus rebuttal of earlier statements. It will clear decks for the accused to get benefit of doubt during pleadings.

The impact of bringing Kooka leaders in the open court will be very unsettling. Undoubtedly, the councils of the accused party's lawyers will do their very best to protect them and funds will be collected for this purpose.........Therefore, the Governor is of the view that rather than prosecuting them in the open court, they should be sued against under 1818 Act-III.*

Thereafter, all the detainees under house-arrest except Sardar Mangal Singh were exiled on the basis of 1818 Act-III

The Places of Exile

(1) Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji was sent to Burma along with his personal servant after two months only. The official record shows that he disembarked on the Rangoon port on 16 March 1872AD and for five months he remained imprisoned in an attic of the Central Jail Rangoon. Thereafter, he was kept in the Post Office bungalow at the cantonment. Thereafter, the satguru was made to board a boat named Ananda

* Kooka Recors, pp. 108-109.

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bound for Margoi on 18 September 1880AD. He reached there on 21 September 1880AD and in 1885 he escaped from the custody of the sentries in a miraculous way. To avert its own responsibility, the government declared that he had passed away on 29 November 1885AD and on the next day he was consigned to flames at about 9 A M at Tanasaram. It has been discussed at length in the coming pages whether the satguru had really passed away on 29 November 1885AD.

(2) Baba Roor Singh, Malook Singh and Pahara Singh were sent to the Fort Asirgarh of Bombay.

(3) Baba Brahma Singh, Jawahar Singh and Lakha Singh were sent to Maulmine, Lower Burma.

(4) Baba Maan Singh and Hukma Singh were imprisoned in Chunar Fort (UP).

(5) Baba Sahib Singh and Kahan Singh were sent to Eden.*

On Government's Declaration

Government's declaration that Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji passed on 29 November 1885 in Margoi turns out to be sham on the following grounds:

(1) Satguru Partap Singh had reached Siam along with some of his selected followers in 1934. The writer of these lines (Nidhan Singh Alam) was also present alongside Chakravarti in his divine presence. On return from Bangkok we had boarded ship from Peenang to Rangoon. The ship had halted at Margoi port on the way. There we tried to probe the

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* Central Records, pp. 108, 109 and 111

Note: Except Mangal Singh, all of them were exiled under 1818 Act-III

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circumstances about the death of the satguru. Bhai Wasava Singh a resident of a colony on the outskirts gave the following statement in our presence:

"I am about seventy and for about twenty years I have been living here as a milkman. I had asked a Brahmi ascetic- who just by chance is not here today- about the satguru. He told that he was a man of great spiritual powers and a very glimpse of him was satiating. First he was kept in the jail but later he was made to stay in bungalow on sea shore. He lived amidst security but it was not so tight. One day he dodged the sentries and disappeared somewhere. Nobody could know anything about him in spite of all effort. By sheer coincidence, a Dogra inmate of the jail died. His name was also Ram Singh. The government took full advantage of his death and declaring him as Kooka guru the authorities cremated him at Tanasaram. A tomb was made in his name at the site of cremation. As a matter of fact, it was a big political fraud."

Sd/-

Wasava Singh, Milkman, Margoi

(2) Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji was taller and well-built than Satguru Hari Singh. But after declaration the clothes which the government handed to Satguru at Ludhiana were too tight to fit even Satguru Hari Singh. Therefore, he said at once that these clothes did not belong to the late satguru.*

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* Satguru Hari Singh had stated this also in this regard that 'once you produce before me the daily prayer recitation book and "garva" belonging to Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji, I will admit that he is no more'. But the government could not produce any of these.

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(3) Sardar Alam Singh, S.D.O. Daska (Punjab) had got the following statement and refuted the government's statement in the periodical 'Satjug' dated 15 Poh 1979AD (1922) saying that he had seen the Satguru in Maulmine city of Burma in 1890 AD. On this occasion the Master had conferred on him the blessing of being a very big man. Sardar Alam Singh had also urged the government to withdraw its statement regarding Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji's death. But nobody listened to him.

(4) The government's statement falls flat also vis-à-vis the contradictions galore in the writings of those officers e.g. the following:

(a) Mr. Mclegan in his report on Census (Vol. 21,P. 17) 1891AD writes about the exile of the satguru saying, "He was exiled immediately and in 1887AD or 1888AD he passed away."

(b) Sayyad Muhammad Latif, the Extra Assistant Commissioner (Judicial) too was a very senior English officer and writer of books in English. He writes in his "Tareekh-e-Punjab*" :

"The panthic leader Ram Singh was arrested and sent to Allahabad. From there he was sent to Burma where he passed away."

Now what we have to see is that the writings of Mclegan and Sayyad Muhammad Lateef have neither any element of mutual coherence nor do they corroborate the government's declaration. The state of utter confusion gripping a responsible officer like Mclegan on the death of the Master on the death of a titanic personality like satguru Ram Singh that he left for his heavenly abode in 1887AD

* History of the Punjab, p. 595.

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in Rangoon, not Margoi makes the whole affair suspicious.

So far as Sayyad Lateef is concerned he does not even know where the satguru died and when. It also seems evident from it that he could not just trust the government's statement on the satguru's death otherwise he would have mentioned in his history very clearly that the holy man died on 29 November 1885AD in Margoi as the government's record avers.

From the above analysis it becomes clear that there is not even an iota of truth in the government's statement.

Although even the namdharis do not know where the satguru is now-a-days but they are of the firm belief that he is very much alive and will definitely appear in Punjab one day.

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Chapter- 25

Punishment to the English Officers

Deputy Commissioner Ludhiana, Mr. Cowan was dismissed from service at the orders of Governor General in Council. But in lieu of his 23 year-long service, he was given a monthly pension of Rs.300.

After a strict dressing down to Forsyth, the Commissioner Ambala, he was transferred to Awadh in this very capacity and salary. From then onwards he became Douglas Forsyth.

A Specimen of English Justice

No eyebrows would have been raised if the government had exonerated the officers guilty of implicating innocent Kookas in the cases of armed struggle against the state and also honoured them with awards and estates. But still, the kind of punishment meted out to the guilty for committing such criminal acts of savagery is a shameful caricature of English justice. In this regard the following references are being given here from the judgment of Governor General and his Council:

Paragraph- 20: Before the act of making men fodder for the cannon, six or seven men were tied to the cannons.*

Mr. Cowan got an official letter by which Forsyth had

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* As mentioned earlier, the point that the Kooka rebels were tied --->

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clearly a case may immediately be prepared against them. Punish them as stringently as possible. I will confirm the punishment without any loss of time. But in response to your desire to be so hasty in this regard I would say that we must not abandon the simple legal procedure which is yet in our hands." Reacting over the letter, Mr. Cowan says, "Having read Mr. Forsyth's letter, I handed it over to Col. Perkins, the Dy. S.P. saying that it would not be fair to stop action against the accused already tied to the cannons as it would leave a bad impact on the onlookers present on the occasion."

Paragraph- 21: Mr. Viceroy, along with his Council does not see that there was any difficulty in stopping the action like this in front of the people who were there to witness the scene of punishment. It was obviously the duty of Mr. Cowan to comply with the orders of Mr. Forsyth in a case that involved the lives of six or seven persons particularly while the act prohibited was ultra vires. The Viceroy along with his Council feels the need to regret that the action taken by Mr. Cowan was unwarranted and illegal as it was not meant at all to mitigate any public sufferings and his actions wore a tinge of savagery. Moreover, this action was taken against the very spirit of instructions given by the senior authority.

Paragraph-23: In the light of the circumstances

<--the cannon is unfounded. Rather they jostled with each other to claim their turn first and were martyred under the sway of a particular sentiment of sacrifice. Bhai Parmanand M.L.A. (Central) testifies this fact in his 'Tareekh-e-Punjab, P.562, "The troops of English government and princely state Patiala were very much there. All of the accused were captured and out of them 49 were blown with cannon fire without any prosecution. Each one of them would go dancing merrily before the cannon to lay down his life. At the sight of this unprecedented spectacle he remarked that he had seen a number of Christs sacrificing themselves.

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described above, the Viceroy is forced to dismiss Mr. Cowan from the job.

Paragraph-24: Now it needs to review the case of Mr. Forsyth who confirmed Mr. Cowan's action and the decision ratified by the officers of Malerkotla in tandem with Mr. Cowan.

Paragraph-30: Along with his Council the Viceroy has decided to remove Mr. Forsyth from his current position as Commissioner Ambala and transfer him to any other state where he will not be assigned any position pertaining to deliverance of justice.

Every sensible man was taken aback at the pronouncement of just eye-wash kind of punishment to the officers responsible for brazenly making cannon fodder of about 100 men. It looked just like an attempt of the regime at establishing an image of being justice-loving. The words of an English officer Sir Henry Cotton deserve notice in this regard:

"Throughout my service career I have never heard such horrible and provocative punishments. There are a number of people like me who are of the view that the judgment of Government of India against the perpetrators of this barbarity was quite inadequate in this case."*

Forsyth's Appeal:

Forsyth could not accepted even the minimal of punishment he was given and reached Shimla. He filed an appeal before the Viceroy North Brook who pronounced judgment in his favour. Thereafter he was appointed on the honourable position of Foreign Minister and conferred knighthood. (Forsyth's hand-written autobiography, Chapter 3.)

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* (a) The other side of the medal by Edward Thompson, Ch. 3.
(b) Indian and Home Memories by Sir Henry Cotton, p. 113.

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Chapter-26

Letter from Maharaja Patiala

The role played by Maharaja Patiala in making the British government let loose a reign of terror on namdharis becomes evident from the order he had issued on 19 January 1872AD about placing them under house-arrests and confiscation of their property. Although it has already been mentioned earlier but it would be difficult to have a feel of this step unless that letter is presented in the court of people. Therefore it has been considered necessary to include a copy of that letter here so as to make the reader familiar with the laudatory tone of the letter:

LETTER

Patiala 120 -2-1872

From: His Highness Maharaja Patiala

To

L.H. Griffin, Esq.,

Offg. Secy. to the Govt. of Panjab.

1. In reply to the telegram from you. I promised in my letter dated 20th ultimo to make enquiries as requested by His Honour The Lt. Governor and communicate to you, if possible the real cause of the Kuka outbreak.
2. I therefore write for the His Honour's information that from many proofs it is certain that Ram Singh's real motive

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and ambition was bent upon religious pretext to regain and acquire dominations, and be deceitfully implanted his capracious notion in the minds of his ignorant and superstitious followers that their creed was to predominate. and that every where the Govt. of the country will be very soon in their own hands; and that they had the fullest belief of this absurdity, be never failed to excite their mind and keep them in agitation and earnest desire to attain that object, and as the numbers of his disciples (full of bigotry and blind zeal of their faith, cared little or nothing of their lives and property in securing the pleasure and satisfaction of their Satguru in furtherence of his motives) had now increased to enormity and vastness, he therefore had a sanguine hope of success and excited them to view with utmost hatred and horror the act of cow-killing.

3. In exciting this prejudice his motive was (as under the religious pretext, the "cartridge" prejudice subverted and put into connection the whole of India in 1857) that by means of this ignitable match he may stir up and excite the feelings of the Hindu community (including the nobility, gentry and the troops) to sympathise and stand up in support of this common cause of hatred against the rulers of the country, anticipating a result from this confusion that in every class and grade of the community he would be held with respect and awe, and thus establish a powerful sway over them, of which he was long in earnest. Had not this appalling punishment been inflicted so promptly upon the insurgents as had been the case, and had not Ram Singh been instantly deported with his Subhas from his home, there was no hope of the disturbance being quelled so soon, and no doubt there would have been an endless waste of money and life before full tranquility and confidence would have been restored.

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4. Had the Kukas even a meagre success in their attacks at Malodh and Kotla the whole sect would have spent like fiends from all sides who were eagerly watching the result of these pantomimic attack.
5. The above is brief result of my enquiries in the matter which have been recorded after a careful observation.
6. There is one thing more which I think should be brought to your notice. I have learnt from newspapers etc. that the Govt has expressed its disapprobation at the manner of the punishment awarded to the insurgents by the local authorities. I believe the object of the Govt. will be misunderstood, and more particularly by the native public and particularly by the knighted sect, who shall no doubt attribute it to some supernatural power of their Satguru. This would, in a great measure, end to frustrate and invalidate the active and efficient measures adopted by the British authorities and the Native Chiefs in the coercion and eradication of the evil which had been so promptly and adequately nipped in the bud before bringing fourth any blossoms of further evil, or rather tend to render them less efficatious and to make them look light and unimportant. I am of opinion that misconstruction of the intention of Government by the Public is always fraught with unpleasant consequences and I deem it right to inform you of the views I take on the subject.

Trusting that His Honour and yourself are in the perfect enjoyment of health.

I am my dear friend
Yours Very Sincerely,*
(Sd/-) Mahinder Singh
Maharaja Patiala

* Kuka Documents, p. 319-321.

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Chapter- 27
Post Script

The Kooka Sikhs were blown to bits with cannon-fire, hanged and exiled. The satguru was also exiled along with his subas. Bhaini Sahib was rampaged and everything including belongings, valuables and cash was deposited in the government's treasury. As if this much was not enough, the reign of repression let loose on namdhari sect was a blatant display of state oppression. The very thought of a spree of oppression unleashed to devastate the sect once for all sends a shudder down the spine. The persecution Satguru Hari Singh, adorable mothers and their progeny had to undergo is a saga of British animalism. It will be discussed in detail in the second volume of the book but it would be pertinent to describe it in brief even here.

A police post was set up at the entrance of Bhaini Sahib and the namdharis were prohibited even paying obeisance at their gurdwara. For about six years no Kooka from outside was allowed to enter Bhaini Sahib. Then the ban was relaxed to the extent that not more than ten Sikhs could enter the gurudwara at a time and they were not allowed to stay there for more than one day. Thereafter they could not visit the gurdwara for one month. The devotees were frisked at the time of both entry into the shrine and exit from there. For a monthly visit also, the Sikhs had to face a lot of harassment at the hands of police. Some of them had to go back without

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paying obeisance at the sanctum sanctorum. Those who refused to go back without visit to their place of devotion were given third degree torture but still the devotees would not return without darshan of the guru's abode. Satguru Hari Singh, Mata Jeewan Kaur and Mata Fateh Kaur were depressed not as much due to their own suffering as due to the deprivation of devotees. These adorable mothers too had to undergo the same search procedure while getting in or going out. It merits mention here that Satguru Partap Singh, Maharaj Nihal Singh and Maharaj Gurdial Singh were born during this very period when Bhaini Sahib had turned into a big jail.

Every namdhari was treated as a rebel and everybody was house-arrested in his own village. The official reporters were deployed in the namdhari inns to report about their arrival, departure and other activities. Gathering of more than five Kookas was banned throughout entire Punjab. Blanket ban was imposed on holding deewans i.e. religious congregations. Some Kookas were sentenced to five to seven years of imprisonment under the charge of holding or reciting akhand paaths. Some of them had to pay fines while some others had to complete their journey of life in the jails. The complete details of this injustice will be given in the next volume of the book. Ban was imposed on Anand Karaj also. No Anand Karaj could be solemnized without the government's permission.

This is verified vide letter No. 391 dated 2/4/1872 by Sir Lapel Griffin, Secretary Punjab Government. He wrote this letter in response to the query by Mr. Atchinson, Secretary Government of India on having been asked by the Governor General regarding the precautions taken to pre-empt the revival of kuka upsurge. The paragraph No. 2 of the letter says:

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"The report received in this regard is based on current reports, public conviction, statements of informers or police agents, and cogent reports of the civil officers from the Commissionerates of Lahore, Amritsar, Jalandhar and Ambala. These reports converge on one common point that the kukas had planned to rise in revolt against the government on any opportune festival like Holi or Baisakhi fair (s). Different time was fixed for rebellion in the districts viz. Sialkot and Gujjranwala, Ambala Commissionerate and the princely states across Satluj. It was also famed at this time that the revolt would start from Amritsar or Anandpur. Nothing was described more specifically. The governor puts forward the plea that certainly they are on the lookout for a chance to rise up in arms but no specific time or place has so far been fixed.

3. The precautionary measure taken by the governor to pre-empt the rebellion of this frenzied sect seem to be sufficient. The total narrative of situation in the country was very meticulously prepared. It was only a few months since the Kookas had started hiding their names and addresses in the districts all over Punjab. The governor does not conform to this view as he understands that the Kookas are present in the state in large numbers and they accept being Kookas.

4. Prominent leaders of *Kooka Panth* or sect have been exiled and strict vigil is kept on the substantial ones and their activities are strictly under scanner. But the circle heads in rural areas (zaildars) and village heads (nambardars) have been ordered to report on them and their activities. They will file a report to the government about the activities of Kookas in their respective areas.

The gathering of more than five has been prohibited in the districts all over Punjab. Carrying of weapons like axes, the sticks with brass pins fitted on the ends and other

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weapons which fall outside the legal provision has been banned. A full-fledged system of surveillance and reports has been raised. The governor is satisfied that now no movement- howsoever small it be- cannot remain off the government's radar.

Dismissal from Armed Forces

It was ordered that namdharis should be shown the exit door from police and military forces and they should no longer be recruited. The Secretary Punjab Government wrote to the Secretary Government of India that the Governor agrees to the advice of Commander-in-Chief that the Kookas should be dismissed from armed forces and there should be a complete ban on their recruitment.* This law will be equally applicable on police also. It further says that in the governor's opinion there may be some upright Kookas also but still they belong to an organization which is bound to stand by the confidential agreements of their leader. There remains no doubt now that the aim of *Kooka* sect is to uproot British regime and establish *Khalsa Raj* here.**

Applications from the Capitalists

The Capitalists' Soft Corner for the Tyrants

The readers have already seen the specimen of how the riyasats of Patiala, Nabha and Jind danced at the tune of the British regime against the patriotic Kookas. As many as 750 cavalry soldiers equipped with nine cannons participated in this massacre from all these three riyasats.***

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* As per the satguru's command no Kooka served in military or police. So, the government's order pertained to those sepoys or officers who bore the impact of Kooka Movement even while being a part of their respective forces.

** Kooka File, p.57

*** Telegram given on p. 71 of Kooka File Central

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Here is an attempt to make the reader familiar with the 'petitions' filed by the nobles, feudal lords, ruling elite, Bedis and Sodhis of Punjab which in a way, are an outburst against the Kookas. The main thrust of these applications is demand for withdrawal of punishment against Cowan and Forsyth as also the restoration of their position.

These appeals were sent to the Punjab Government through Golak Nath, a Christian missionary of Jalandhar. These applications seem to have been stage-managed by the government itself. Golak Nath writes:

"Last month (May), people from several cities along with the locals assembled here (in Jalandhar) under the leadership of Bikram Singh Bahadur Ahluwalia. This assemblage aimed at beseeching the Government of India for a review of case against the former Commissioner and Superintendent Ambala T.D. Forsyth which had led to his transfer to Awadh from Punjab.

A large number of members in the gathering are well familiar with the conduct of the Kookas and they know that till the Malerkotla cannon fire incident their numbers had been swelling continuously but still they resented that the government had punished the sincere officers who had simply discharged their duty by taking strict action against a sect which aimed at exterminating English rule from Punjab.

As per the direction and permission of the President of this assembly, I am sending herewith the duly-signed applications which are in Urdu language for the favour of forwarding the same by your good self to the Governor so that they are moved further onwards to the Governor General of India and his Council."

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No. 1

To
The Governor,

We, the subjects of the Queen very humbly and respectfully submit in the service of our justice-loving government and particularly Lord Northbrook against a recent order by which Mr. Cowan has been dismissed from service and Mr. Forsyth, the Commissioner Ambala is transferred to Awadh. We make an earnest appeal to the government for the cancellation of this order. This is not hidden from the responsible officers of the government that the Kookas never wanted the English to enjoy a peaceful time in the state. This is something quite clear from their conduct. In the name of attending the fairs they gather in large numbers and rake communal issues on the occasion. They appointed their armed subas at different places and made their own postal department. They composed their own rebellious song:

> **Khalsa ji ka raj hosi, un ke agge rahe na *kosi*.**
>
> (Only the Khalsa will rule and none will be able to stand before it.)

They kept speaking against the government in their functions and that too in the situations like fairs which were under government's strict vigil. Initially they tried to have a feel of government's intentions and remained reticent after the attack. They just wanted to test the extent up to which the government can keep them behind bars. Finally when it was proved that the crime was committed by the Kookas only, the government did not apprehend all members of the sect. Then in order to trigger communal riots they took up the issue of cow-slaughter while at the back of their mind they expected to make Hindu mainstream join them. Thus

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encouraged they tested the governance acumen of the government. We are of the firm belief that had they not been suitably punished, our repute and property and in general our life would have been imperilled far more than those of the victims of Amritsar case. But an experienced officer that Mr. Forsyth was, he was well conversant with their conduct and intentions. He was well aware of these apprehensions and he was present on the site of second incident. So he blew into bits the accused Kookas with the cannon fire and thus demolished the romantic citadel of most of the Kookas who were eyewitnesses to this macabre spectacle. This way he could pre-empt the conflagration at the stage of smouldering only. Therefore, an overall analysis of the situation makes us conclude that his punitive and of course timely step became instrumental in saving our honour. But rather than appreciating his dedication towards duty he was subjected to condemnation. Setting aside our gratefulness towards this justice-loving officer we seek your permission to resent and complain against the charges levelled against him rather than appreciating him for his dutifulness. We make a humble submission here for the acceptance of our appeal just in keeping with his glorious services rendered prior to this incident. In fact, the government issued orders against him only on the basis of apparent mistakes perceptible in the documents of the case."

Sd/-

Harnam Singh Ahluwalia, Bikrama Singh Ahluwalia, Suchet Singh Ahluwalia, Golak Nath, the missionary and 437 others including the landlords, members of municipal committees, zaildars and usurers of villages.

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No.2

To

The Governor,

Indubitably, our government is kind enough to have conferred full liberty on the people in general and press media in particular to come out candidly in case they notice some drawback in its governance or any lacuna in the orders meant for public welfare. They are also free to put forward their corrective suggestions also. The editors of newspapers had raised many objections on the first case against the Kookas. Like journalists, we-the nobles too have a right to communicate heartily to the government as and when we detect a failing with regard to any issue concerning our country. In our opinion, the press media has raised very valid points and objections against the government's orders. Therefore, a committee was instituted in this regard for filing a petition to the government. The names of the Committee have been given district-wise at the end of the petition. They have reached the decision unanimously that the orders issued in this case must be renewed. So it became necessary to file this petition as we understand the situation of the country better in comparison. This has already been accepted in the Parliament that religious praxis of the Kookas was just sham, a façade. Indians and Punjabis in particular understand that ever since its inception, the namdhari set had ambitions of acquiring political power in the country and nobody trusted their being selfless and dedicated to the Supreme. They put forward a number of pleas in justification of their intent and purpose. All of the pleas are not being given here due to paucity of space. However, one or two of these are being submitted here for ready reference.

The policy of the Kooka sect aims at grabbing political

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power. They preach boycott of the English commodities and injunction against falsehood and theft etc. just as visor but in reality they advocate the method conducive to gaining power. They had appointed one Suba (Governor) and one Deputy Suba for every hundred thousand Kookas. Every suba reported his daily progress to Guru Ram Singh. In case some Kookas' economic condition waned dismally, they were helped out of the public contribution by others of the sect. The food grain stores were raised in Bhaini Sahib and arrangements made to maintain them properly. They address their spiritual master as 'paatshah' (Emperor). Some time back they had started organizing big fairs because of the generosity of the government and used these occasions to make way for an uprising against the British government quite overtly. First, they encouraged taking men from other faiths (except the Muslims and English Christians) into their fold. These were the people who were deadly against even the idea of cow slaughter. They initiated these neophytes into elimination of butchers. Suba Giani Singh was appointed as Commanding Officer by Guru Ram Singh for killing the butchers. At the time of his arrest and execution he had announced revenge by the community as soon as possible for this punishment to him. His followers declared that they had resolved to avenge upon the death of Giani Singh. Although it had been propagated that they had gone mad and Ram Singh had reported this condition of theirs to the concerned authorities also yet he (Guru Ram Singh) had infused this spirit of revenge in all the Kookas through his subas and it stood vindicated also. For this purpose they chose the time when Maharaja Patiala was away to Delhi. Death of the Nawab of Malerkotla had orphaned the riyasat and it was not long since the ruler of Nabha state had ascended the throne. They were determined to first gain

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power in Malerkotla and having captured horses and weapons from there to seize the fort Badali of Patiala which in turn would be followed by sudden attack on riyasat Nabha. First, they attacked Malaud and then pounced on Malerkotla. Had they not been captured, his followers would flock to join them from all sides to help them. But this well-conceived uprising was foiled by the timely arrangements of Mr. Cowan who managed to gain armed troops from the neighbouring rulers beside the English force. Mr. Forsyth had also reached in time.

The accused Kookas were sentenced to death. There was no specific order against blowing them with cannons. Such kind of punishment is very useful for setting a precedent for others to see. The method of executing death sentence was decided in consultation with the local rulers. The ruler of Jind had blown with cannon fire two villages in 1854 in the wake of a tehsildar's death. The purport behind what the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner did was the larger public interest favouring the government at the same time. Law must not take upper hand in such a case which has a motive to destabilise the system. The events of Dera Jaat in the border state of Peshawar Kohaat must be taken into consideration in this context. Four or five contingents had entered Delhi to crush the 1857AD mutiny. Had they been arrested immediately and blown with cannon fire the subsequent events would not have spread as fast as they did. The Kooka attack was also identical to that of 1857AD mutiny. With any kind of laxity in this case, the situation too would have assumed alarming proportions. We understand that Mr. Forsyth acted as a general in crushing this uprising and nothing that he did was against the law of the land. He failed only in reporting the matter beforehand to the Chief Court. But it was not warranted in the sense that in the event

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of exhibiting any laxity some other group of Kookas would have surged forward to save their comrades. The same kind of trouble could spread in other parts of the country also. The kind of punitive method adopted by the authorities terrorised the Kookas to the extent that none of them would dare raise his head in future. Some followers have even said good bye to the sect out of the fear instilled by this event. But Mr. Cowan has been dismissed from service while Mr. Forsyth is transferred with the result that it has infused a new life in the sect rendered lifeless otherwise by the punishment. The followers of the sect attribute it to the miracle of their Master who despite undergoing troubles will come out victorious in the end like the other spiritual leaders. Now they are out to collect funds for the release of their Master and on the lookout for the well established Suba.

It has been told earlier, the Kookas are ambitious to rule over the country. If the orders against Mr. Cowan and Mr. Forsyth are not revised in their favour, it is apprehended that the weakness of administration will only encourage the rebellious elements to something damaging to the state. Admitted that both the officers missed out on impeccable obedience to law but God forgive, they did not do it for furthering any of their personal interests.

We (the subjects of government) have not come forward to favour any particular party or ourselves but we beseech the government with folded hands to cancel this order and oblige us. The list of signatories on the petition is attached herewith.

No. 3

(Sent by Sardar Bishan Singh- the landlord of Kalsian)

Mr. Forsyth, the Commissioner Ambala and Mr. Cowan, Deputy Commissioner Ludhiana, have done a commendable

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job by thwarting the sinister designs of Kookas. It is an exemplary punishment for the misled wrong doers. Fortunately, we have been able to foil their well-contemplated agenda of capturing political power in the country. While the performance of the two senior administrative authorities is genuine on all counts, the orders passed against them by still higher authorities have engendered some apprehensions in our minds regarding the turmoil it can lead to. This decision has breathed a new life into the rebellious Kooka sect rendered lifeless otherwise. Therefore we venture to send this submission through Mubarak Ali to the Committee that was formed in Jalandhar. We pray to your good self to reconsider this decision and oblige.

Sd/-

Bishan Singh Kalsian- landlord of Kalsian

(No. 4)

(From the landlords of District Karnal)

The nobles of district Karnal write in support of the Jalandhar Committee against the punishment meted out to Mr. Cowan and Mr. Forsyth:

"These officers deserve kudos for the action they took against the kukas who did what they did intentionally. But on the contrary, orders of dissent and annoyance were issued against them. They became instrumental in rejuvenating the kukas who almost lay lifeless after the iron-hand action taken by the officers under reference against them. The non-withdrawal of these orders is likely to result in many kinds of political loss. Therefore we- the people of Punjab- had instituted a committee at Jalandhar with a view to pray before the government that the orders in question may kindly be cancelled. While filing this petition we- the landlords of

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Karnal submit our concurrence with the Jalandhar Committee.

Sd/- Nawab Shamsher Ali Khan- Istmarardar
(a revenue rank during British regime),
Raees (a noble) of Karnal

Nawab Mohammad Ali Khan Bahadur	Raees of Karnal
Mehar Ilahi Khan	----do----
Nawab Akram Khan	----do----
Nawab Injabat Ali Khan	----do----
Nawab Karam Din Khan	----do----
Nandu Lal	Member, M.C. Karnal
Narain Das	----do----
Lala Makhan Mal	----do----
Duarka Das,	Usurer Karnal
Jawahar Singh	----do----
Jugal Kishore,	Kanungo (a revenue official) of Karnal
Sayyad Amir Ali	Raees of Karnal
Sayyd Wazir Ali	----do----
Sayyad Mohammad Hussain	----do----
Sayyad Inayat Ali	----do----
Bhola Nath Mahajan	----do----
Sayyad Hashmat Ali	----do----
Shiv Dyal Singh	Member MC Karnal

(No. 5)

(From Tehsil Jagadhari)

An application with the same subject and content was

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forwarded by Tehsil Jagadhari. It bore the signatures of 74 persons. Out of these 6 were Sikhs, 2 Muslims and 66 Hindus.

(No. 6)

(From Riyasat Booriyan)

A similar application bearing the signatures of the following men was also sent from Booriyan.

Jeewan Singh, Honorary Magistrate,	Raees* Booriyan
Gurbakhsh Singh,	Raees of Dyalgarh
Harditt Singh	-----do-----

Apart from them 11 Hindus also put their signatures on the application.

(No. 7)

(From Machhrauli Jagdholi)

Again the same content and same subject:
Partap Singh Macchrauli
Inder Singh Ladwa Kalan
Jai Singh Changoli
Santokh Singh Jagdholi
Fateh Singh, Landlord
Sant Singh, Landlord of Sran
Kirpal Singh and Ishar Singh, Landlords of Sran

(No. 8)

(From District Ambala)

Same petition with the following signatures:
Raja Bhagwan Singh of Manimajra
Raja Hira Singh of Pabhat
Kheewan Singh of Maleha
Fateh Singh, Landlord
Manu Mal Chaudhary, Manimajra

* A group of villages or sub-division of a district in India

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Jawahar Lal Kurali
Kashi Ram Kurali
Chooni of Kurali and
17 other Hindus and Sikhs.

(No. 9)

(From District Hoshiarpur)

Raja Hamid-ulla-Khan of Rajauri- Hoshiarpur
Amir Chand, Raees of Bajwara.
Pundit Hari Shankar Extra Assistant Commissioner Hoshiarpur.
Shiv Parsad Tehsildar and 140 zaildars and nambardars of District Hoshiarpur

(No. 10)

(From Bedis and Sodhis of Anandpur)

All the above documents were put up before a 500-strong Committee comprising the Bedis and Sodhis of Anandpur. Confirming the Hoshiarpur Anjuman they said unanimously that the punishment given to the Kookas was justified. Had this measure not been taken the Kookas would feel encouraged to rise in revolt somewhere else as well.

Sd/-

Sujan Singh, Jaimal Singh- Member Municipal Committee, Lachhman Das Superintendent Bandobast and pargana* plus 40 more zaildars and usurers of Una.

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Chapter-28

Government and Non-Government Writers

(1) The former Commissioner of Ambala Commissionerate Mr. J.W.Macnabb writes about Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji in his report dated 4 November 1871AD:

"His intentions maybe whatever in the beginning but now his ambitions are political. He is the leader of a sect which by its very nature is aimed at reviving the Khalsa Raj and inimical to the British Empire. Earlier, Ram Singh was treated as a reincarnation of Guru Nanak Dev while now he is visualized as Guru Gobind Singh incarnate.'

Ram Singh is not an ordinary faqir. He comes across you in the company of about half a dozen horse-riders and scores of men are escorting him. Surrounded by his subas attired in white ensemble, he enters your camp with royal elan.'

Ram Singh is not a puppet in the hands of crafty people. Whosoever saw him must not have missed out on the stability of his intellect and character. These higher attributes do not fall to the share of a common leader."

(2)Sayyad Mohammad Lateef, the Extra Assistant Commissioner writes in his book "History of Punjab" writes:

"Kooka sect is the mission of a true spiritual Master. The basic tenet of his education is worship of God. He is a man of high moral values. He does not believe in banning widow re-marriage. He is also against receiving money in

lieu of marrying daughter or sister. He directs his men to lead a life of ethics. He abstains from intake of intoxication. His props are a woollen rosary, round turban and a stick. Ram Singh is a man of great intellectual capabilities. By and by he has gained popularity because of his cultivation of nobility and abstinence in his Sikhs. The number of his followers has proliferated along with the number of his followers. Ram Singh and his disciples are not only religious but he upholstered his ingrained political agenda in the garb of religious reform and ethicality." (pp. 594-595)

(3) An official tract titled "A Brief Saga of Kooka Sect" writes that he preaches ethical values and condemns vices like theft, falsehood and licentiousness. He aspires strongly to restore Sikhism to its pristine glory. He is anxious to exterminate the evils which have corrupted Sikhism. (p. 47).

(4) Fazal Hussain, a police inspector of district Hoshiarpur who was appointed as special reporter on the occasion of Hola Mohalla Anandpur writes in his report on 20 March 1867AD.

"Ram Singh provides food and clothing to the poor and preaches ethical values to them. He bathes thrice daily and recites Guru Granth Sahib at 2 AM. He is immune to every kind of evil. Therefore, the Kookas love him a lot and venerate him. He is of the view that he is the Messenger sent by God for the establishment of Kooka sect to replace the demolition of Sikhism as the ideal path of life."

(5) From Prime Minister Pundit Jawahar Lal Nehru*

No Indian can deny the greatness of contribution made by Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji 75 years back towards liberating India from the yoke of British rule.

Congress had made wonderful achievements by

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* Basant issue of 'Satijug' 22 Maagh 1994 (1937 AD) , P.2

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following the path marked by him and even after the passage of 75 years that program has not become obsolete.

I believe that if the Sikhs follow the path shown by him, it would activate freedom struggle of India in a big way. And, there is no wonder if the chains of India's slavery are cut off very soon due to the well-tested bravery of India.

Sd/- Jawahar Lal Nehru

(6). Neta ji Subhash Chandra Bose's Message

The country will always feel proud of the flag of freedom hoisted by Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji. Now once again the patriotism of Indians is under the tough ordeal of patriotism. The namdhari Sikhs maintaining peace for the last 75 years must naturally be expected to become flag-bearers of freedom in India as the fountainhead of inspiration for others also. Guru Ram Singh was the first and foremost leader of peaceful movement of non-cooperation in India

(7) Sardar Sardul Singh Kaveeshar, President All India Forward Block writes in one of his articles. It is said about Mahatma Gandhi, the champion of non-cooperation movement is said to have borrowed this idea from a Russian writer Leo Tolstoy. We are least concerned about the factuality of this claim but Indians must bear it in mind that the first to accord importance to religion in the field of politics was a Punjabi of non-cooperation movement. Truly speaking he is the champion of this movement. When he came to realize the wickedness of the government he started propagating it very ardently.

It is traditionally believed that from Rangoon, the satguru had migrated to Russia. If this is the reality, then maybe he met Tolstoy in Russia and the legendary writer had his indoctrination in non-cooperation from Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji only.

(8) Pundit Sunder Lal,- the author of "Bharat Mein

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Angrezi Raj (British Rule in India)" writes in one of his essays titled "Itihas ka Ek Bhoola Hua Panna (A Forgotten Page of History)":

"Guru Ram Singh should be treated as the only one who established Namdhari sect. His teachings are an amalgam of religion and politics. Every namdhari is bound to obey his word of mouth. He makes a call for boycotting the English jobs, courts and schools exactly the way Muslim clergy had done in their fatwas (edict) in 1857AD and later. He seems to have influenced the people of Punjab in a big way. (Hindi monthly *"Vishwa Vani"* Allahabad June 1942, p. 703).

(9) Master Tara Singh, the eminent Akali leader writes:

"After the collapse of Sikh rule the Sikhs were oppressed with the result that lakhs of Sikhs had fallen from their mandatory Sikh discipline. A pall of melancholy had descended on them. Sikhism seemed to be in moribund condition. The Sikhs supported the English during 1857 mutiny. The maintenance of Sikhism demands Sikh sentiment accompanied with Sikh esteem and unflinching faith in Sikhism. All this was on sharp decline after the fall of Sikh state and the very existence of Sikhism was under threat. The Sikh saints just preached but they could do little to revive Sikhism. Baba Ram Singh was fully equipped with all that could enkindle a new zeal in the panth. His preaching spread a wave of Sikh pride, the mainstay of Sikhism, throughout Punjab. *Naam* (the holy name of God) and *shabd* (message enshrined in the holy gurbani) echoed all around."

"With the study of *Baba ji's* sacred biography, I felt convinced that he is the flag-bearer for reviving the tenets of Sikhism after its degeneration as the aftermath of the collapse of Sikh rule. He was the first to remind Sikhs of their forgotten faith and attached them to gurbani. I cannot rule out the fact that he motivated Sikhs towards the basic Sikh spirit and

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ethos. Through his non-cooperation movement he initiated Sikhs into patriotism. Due to his 'crime' of dreaming about the freedom of his motherland, he had to face exile and house-arrest along with some of his well-known subas. The Sikhs for whom he had made this supreme sacrifice forgot him altogether."*

(10) Giani Hira Singh Dard, Editor 'Phulwadi' writes:

"About twenty years following the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, a ray of hope pierced the pall of seemingly impenetrable darkness. It was Baba Ram Singh who embodied it. When he found his fraternity feeling humiliated due to slavery and saw hypocrisy masquerading as religion in the gurdwaras, he felt it intolerable. He was a paragon of self-esteem, freedom, faith and morality. Every Sikh suffered the pangs of deprivation and humiliation heaped on the community after the dismantling of Sikh empire. The need of the time was a leader competent enough to steer the community out of the prevailing situation. As the Sikhs found in Baba Ram Singh the messiah who could liberate them from the prevailing state of affairs they followed him en masse."**

(11) Ranjit Singh *'Tajwar'*, the editor **"Babbar Sher"** comes out with his opinion on the founder of Kooka Movement saying,

"All the ten gurus did their utmost to pull the community out of the mire of darkness. They instilled a feeling of dauntlessness in the people living under constant fear and led them on the path of freedom. This is what made them the spiritual light-house for lesser mortals. Similarly, to my mind Guru Ram Singh also felt the pulse of time after

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* In an article dated 10 Maagh 1992 (1935 AD), Master Tara Singh had said.

** Basant issue of 'Satjug', 12 Maagh 1995, P.29-30

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1857 mutiny- known to be the first war for freedom- and motivated the people for fighting the second war."*

(12)Bhai Sahib Bhai Parmanand, the former Member of Central Assembly writes in his 'Urdu Twareekh Punjab':

"When ghadar was at its peak in India, Guru Ram Singh started propagating this (Kooka) society. Within a short span of time the number of his followers increased phenomenally. During a period of 10-12 years his following touched two hundred thousand in Punjab. There was definitely something magical in his speech. It was a common view that whosoever got the secret chant from the Baba he would become his only. Once, some scoundrels came just to test the guru. But he cast such a spell that they turned Sikhs under his charismatic effect." (P.558)

(13)Kirpal Singh 'Panchhi', the author of "Shaheedi Jeewan" gives his reflections on the Kuka Movement as under:

"Punjab was usurped. Maharaja Dalip Singh was sent to England. Nobody is unaware of what happened with Maharani Jindan. Punjab had stated waking from deep libernation. It unleashed a fulsome wave called Kooka Movement. Despite being partly religious and partly social it was not powerful enough to topple the regime but to bring about a total transformation." (P.17-18)

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* Basant issue of 'Satjug', 22 Maagh, 1996

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Chapter-29

A Cursory Glance

A cursory glance on these writings reveals that Sarguru Ram Singh provided his sagacious leadership to the panth and nation at such a crucial time when with the toppling of Sikh regime by the foreign rulers with their diplomatic stratagems, the country was passing through a phase of desperation. The rulers were committing ineffable atrocities on the people. In Guru Nanak Dev's idiom the kings of 'kalijug' had come in the shape of butchers with the result that the religious values had taken wings and flown out of the window.* Falsehood was spreading fast its tentacles all around in this world of darkness and eclipsed the moon of truth. India-the motherland was calling out for a leader who could extricate her from the gloom and show right path to the people at large."

In this very era of darkness, the founder of Namdhari Movement emerged out as light-house and illumined the dark corridors of India's religious, social and political life. This luminosity was naturally irritating to the forces of darkness, oppression and exploitation. But the faithful sons of the land saw the rays of hope dancing in the celestial aura of their leader.

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* *Kal kaati raje kasaai dharam pankh kar udrya.*
Koor amaavas sach chandarma deese nahi kah charhya.
Hau bhaal vikunni hoee, aadhere rah na koee. (Sri Adi Granth Sahib)

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He is the True Master

The way he enkindled the spark of religiosity in not only hundreds but lakhs of people with his spiritual prowess, the beneficiaries accepted him as their religious leader. They worshipped him as the Ultimate Reality- an image that is still intact. So much so that the English officer Mr. Macnabb- his bête noire- too had to admit that he was treated in his times a reincarnation of Guru Nanak Dev and Guru Gobind Singh.

The First Socio- Political Leader

Following the fall of Sikh empire the people in general suffered from a famine of national sentiments and social evils had hollowed the social fabric. Bound in chains of slavery the people felt demoralized. The Kooka Movement launched by Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji was the first movement of social reform and political awareness which fetched him public acknowledgement as the first social reformer and political leader after Guru Gobind Singh.

Unique Warrior

The bravery, enthusiasm and resoluteness with which he fought against the English in political arena was unprecedented during those days. Those were the times when utterance of a single word against the whites was tantamount to inviting death. So we are impelled to say that even in the political field he was as fearless and invincible as Guru Gobind Singh.

The First House-Arrest

In English rule he turns out to be the first person who posed a threat to the very existence of the regime. As a result he was placed under house arrest within the boundaries of Bhaini Sahib.

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Parallel Government

He organized his movement in such a wonderful manner that a parallel government was raised in India. It shows him as a great organizer and first creator of parallel government.

The First Satyagrahi

He appears to be the first person who introduced non-cooperation as tool of protest about twenty years before the formation of Indian National Congress. He established the ideal and peaceful method of satygraha and defied openly the government's orders. Thus he appears to be the first and foremost practitioner of satygraha in India's struggle for freedom.

The Resoluteness Embodied

During those days the rulers, nobles and even the Sikh clergy chose to stand by the government and tried to set obstacles in his way. But remaining steadfast like Sumer the mountain, he did not swerve an inch from his ideals.

Emancipator of Women

He paid special attention to the raising of women's social position. Earlier, women were not allowed to take amrit for initiation into Sikhism but he lifted this ban and made brought them at par with men in this practice at least. He was so conscious about their parity with men that he included a young woman named Bibi Hukma from village Wariahn (district Tarn Taran) in his subas to disseminate the faith among women. This young woman had a very strong and high moral character. She was addressed as 'mahatma' by one and all in Bhaini Sahib. She spent a large part of her life in service at Bhaini Sahib. Maharaja Ripudaman Singh, the ruler of Nabha had joined namdhari panth due to her

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inspiration. To sum up, the satguru was a model of women's emancipation.

A Great Socialist Leader

The concept of socialism which catches the fancy of all intellectuals today was established in his characteristic way by Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji. He started langars (free community kitchens) everywhere and ensured that these are kept running round-the-clock even though the buildings have to be sold out for the same. The buildings are not built with palatial grandeur in Bhaini Sahib only to expend the money thus saved in the interests of the needy. The namdhari sect has till date been a votary of egalitarianism. The langar remains open 24 hours in the service of all irrespective of anybody's economic status.

A namdhari visits the house of the other as if it is his own house. This is the ideal envisaged by Guru Nanak Dev. Since the Sikhs had forgotten it altogether, Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji took it upon him to put it into practice. He propagated and practiced the ideas which the socialists talk of with pride. In nutshell, the satguru did a yeoman's service in the fields of religion, society, politics and ethics. He extirpated the evils and served the society and country during the times when there was darkness all around in the atmosphere.

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Chapter-30

Mata Jeewan Kaur's Gems

Three sons were born to the Mata Jeewan Kaur from Satguru Hari Singh.

(1) Sri Satguru Partap Singh

Satguru Partap Singh was born on sunday on sunset on Chetar Vadi 3 1946AD (Bikrami). He ascended the spiritual throne on Jeth Vadi 10, 1963 (Bikrami) at 5 minutes past 5 PM after the passing away of Satguru Hari Singh. He was married to (Mata) Bhupender Kaur daughter of Sardar Sunder Singh of Gurusar District Ferozepur on 13 Poh 197I (Bikrami). Two sons were born from this wedlock. First Baba Jagjit Singh was born on 8 Maghar 1977 (Bikrami and 1920 AD) and the second one Baba Bir Singh saw the light of the day on 2 Kattak 1980 (Bikrami). Satguru Partap Singh gave wonderful leadership to the Panth in religious and social reforms. Besides, he is taking an active part in politics also. Organizing several conferences at his own expenditure for unification of Sikh sects and other organizations, he made great effort in binding different flowers of Guru Nanak's love into a bouquet. Also, he has played a vital role in associating Sikh organizations to Indian National Congress. Each and every member of Indian National Congress has great reverence for him. Pundit Jawahar Lal Nehru, held him in high esteem. He always yearned for the sublimation of Sikh

community in its religion and wanted it to play an active role for the freedom of India in accordance with its glorious tradition.

(2) Maharaj Nihal Singh

Maharaj Nihal Singh was the second son of Satguru Hari Singh. He was born on Kattak Vadi 10 1949 Bikrami. He had been a very brilliant and conscientious man. He was married to Bibi Satwant Kaur daughter of Baba Dhyan Singh (a landlord of Sialkot) and Mata Bhagwanti in 1971 Bikrami at Lahore. Baba Dhyan Singh Patthranwale (whose houses are situated on Mela Ram Road outside Bhati Darwaza) was one of Satguru Hari Singh's favourite servants disciples/Sikh. Mata Bhagwanti still feels happy in serving the devotees in spite of her old age. Maharaj Nihal Singh had two sons-Thakur Shamsher Singh and Maharaj Visheshar Singh. Both were scholars in English. Maharaj Nihal Singh had struggled hard in freedom struggle and was sent to jail thrice under the banner of Indian National Congress. He had been arrested while leading the Liquor Picketing Movement in 1929 AD as the Dictator of the Movement on behalf of Punjab State Congress Committee. He faced the arrest very elegantly. He was a man of higher human values possessing sterling qualities of head and heart. He had been earning his livelihood for long in Lahore with the sweat of his brow. If someone wanted to donate some offering to him in his capacity of being from the line of the namdhari gurus he would decline politely saying it belonged only to Bhaini Sahib. So he never accepted any offering from devotees in his individual capacity.

(3) Maharaj Gurdial Singh

He was younger to Maharaj Nihal Singh. He is no longer

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with us in his temporal frame but he will be remembered forever. He was born in Assu 1954 Bikrami. He was a man of simplicity and finer sensibilities. He was a patriotic at the core of his heart. In the pursuit of country's independence he was a guardian of higher values in namdhari sect. He was a member of Punjab State Congress Committee. He had attended the sessions of Indian National Congress in 1921-1922 and 1923AD as member of All India Congress Committee. He was married to Bibi Kartar Kaur, also the daughter of Sardar Dhyan Singh. But he was so much dedicated to the Panth and motherland that worldly temptations always failed to distract him. His was a life of an ascetic. He was a known scholar of English language and a great writer also. He had gained this erudition at individual level only. He conducted an in-depth study on namdhari history and wrote many articles. But unfortunately the age betrayed him and he had to bid adieu to the ephemeral world with the aspirations for the progress of Panth and nation suppressed in his heart. Not long after his departure, Bibi Kartar Kaur also left for her heavenly abode.

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Appendix

The facts which we have tried to encapsulate in this book about Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji and Namdhari Movement are not complete as yet. It is just a humble attempt at putting together some particular events of Namdhari History in brief. What kind of hardships had the sect to undergo after the exile of Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji? What was the impact of ban on the gathering of more than five Sikhs? How many Sikhs were fined and imprisoned under charges of holding Akhand Paaths? What kind of problems had the devotees to face in having a darshan of Satguru Hari Singh and paying obeisance at the gurdwara due to deployment of police at the gate of Bhaini Sahib from 1872 to 1923AD? What kind of problems Satguru Hari Singh and Mata Jeewan Kaur and Fateh Kaur faced in the prevailing situation? Bans were imposed on the movement of namdharis as if they were hardcore criminals. What was the fate of exiled subas? In which country or in which jails or forts did they breathed their last? Which devotees from Punjab went to Burma to see Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji by sea voyage and what trouble had they to undergo in the process? From among those, through whom did the satguru send his edicts for the devotees? What kind of punishments did the devotees who went to see the satguru have to undergo at the hands of government? These details have yet to be explored. This is the very first document of its kind which is based on the

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best-researched matter. Every effort has been made to protect it from exaggeration with the result that every incident could be described in its realistic colouring. All the events have been described on the basis of credible testimony.

The hero of this book has been revered with the honorific 'Satguru' prefixed to his name due to his spiritual stature. There is no intention at all to irritate or hurt the sentiments of anybody. It is simply meant to emphasise the namdhari viewpoint on the basis of Sikh history and gurbani. It is hoped that this book will be helpful in filling an alarming gap in Sikh history. If viewed in isolation from communal bias, it will be very useful.

The readers will find in it the seed of nationalism, patriotism and service to the panth. This is what is needed most by the panth and nation today. The history included in the book at hand should be a matter of pride for the country as a whole but for Sikhs in particular it is something to feel greatly proud of. They should feel elated at the very thought that the great leader who infused a new life in the moribund body-fabric of Sikhism, who was among the firsts to struggle for the freedom of India from the British yoke and treaded the path of non-cooperation and satyagraha was a part of Sikh community. Also, he had to suffer exile much before even the birth of Indian National Congress. Besides, he had to face the brunt of Bengal Regulation Act No.3 of 1818 AD. The Sikhs are proud today that Indian National Congress, the biggest national party of India feels proud to follow his footsteps. Nobody knows where that beloved leader of the masses is dreaming about the establishment of swaraj in India and is pining for a glimpse of his motherland but the fruit of his sacrifices is well before the country as a whole. As regards his honorific we don't contest anybody calling him Baba (respectable address in Sikhism), Mahapurkh (Great man),

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Mahan Atma (Great Soul) or satguru (True Master) because we believe that these words cannot overshadow his greatness. Anyhow, irrespective of difference of religious faith, this fact has to be acknowledged by one and all that the protagonist of this book is a brilliant and matchless gem of India whose charisma created leaders like Jawahar Lal Nehru and synthesisers of spirituality and politics like Mahatma Gandhi. It is because of following his principles only that Congress could occupy the seats of power in the government after freedom. So far as the honorific words are concerned these are just symbolic of the popular faith or reverence shown by different kinds of devotees. Our addressing him as 'satguru' will not add a micron of glory to his already elevated spiritual status while calling him 'Baba' will not erode even an iota of it. However, it is to be noted that if we try to delve deep into the ocean of his achievements-historical or spiritual- we are sure to get the most valuable pearls. He has to be evaluated in the light of his contribution and towards the panth and sacrifices made for the motherland. But before that, the mind has to be cleansed of communal bias.

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Nidhan Singh Alim

CENTRAL UNIVERSITY OF PUNJAB

Baba Satguru Ram Singh Chair
Central University of Punjab
Bathinda

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